This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

3 3433 07138131 7

w Yo
lic Librar

FAMOUS WOMEN OF THE FRENCH COURT.

From the French of Imbert de Saint-Amand.

Each with Portrait, 12mo, $1.25.

THREE VOLUMES ON MARIE ANTOINETTE.

MARIE ANTOINETTE AND THE END OF THE OLD RÉGIME.
MARIE ANTOINETTE AT THE TUILERIES.
MARIE ANTOINETTE AND THE DOWNFALL OF ROYALTY.

THREE VOLUMES ON THE EMPRESS JOSEPHINE.

CITIZENESS BONAPARTE.
THE WIFE OF THE FIRST CONSUL.
THE COURT OF THE EMPRESS JOSEPHINE.

FOUR VOLUMES ON THE EMPRESS MARIE LOUISE.

THE HAPPY DAYS OF MARIE LOUISE.
MARIE LOUISE AND THE DECADENCE OF THE EMPIRE.
MARIE LOUISE AND THE INVASION OF 1814.
MARIE LOUISE, THE RETURN FROM ELBA, AND THE HUNDRED DAYS.

TWO VOLUMES ON THE DUCHESS OF ANGOULÊME.

THE YOUTH OF THE DUCHESS OF ANGOULÊME.
THE DUCHESS OF ANGOULÊME AND THE TWO RESTORATIONS.

THREE VOLUMES ON THE DUCHESS OF BERRY.

THE DUCHESS OF BERRY AND THE COURT OF LOUIS XVIII.
THE DUCHESS OF BERRY AND THE COURT OF CHARLES X.
THE DUCHESS OF BERRY AND THE REVOLUTION OF JULY, 1830.

Four New Volumes.

WOMEN OF THE VALOIS AND VERSAILLES COURTS.

WOMEN OF THE VALOIS COURT.
THE COURT OF LOUIS XIV.
THE COURT OF LOUIS XV.
THE LAST YEARS OF LOUIS XV.

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY

DAYS

V.
UIS 1

MARIE ANTOINETTE.

Dauphiness of France.

2

WOMEN OF VERSAILLES

3

LAST YEARS OF LOUIS XV

BY

IMBERT DE SAINT-AMAND

TRANSLATED BY

ELIZABETH GILBERT MARTIN

DES
1892

WITH PORTRAITS

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1893

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
5211B
ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
R 1939 L

COPYRIGHT, 1893, BY
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

CONTENTS

PAGE

INTRODUCTION 1

FIRST PART

THE COURT AND THE CITY AT THE END OF THE REIGN OF LOUIS XV.

CHAPTER

I. THE KING 9

II. THE NOBILITY 15

III. THE CLERGY 18

IV. THE MAGISTRACY 22

V. THE MIDDLE CLASSES 29

VI. THE PEOPLE 34

VII. POLITICAL WOMEN 40

VIII. LOVE 45

IX. THE FAMOUS SALONS 51

X. THE PHILOSOPHERS 68

SECOND PART

THE WOMEN OF VERSAILLES AT THE END OF THE REIGN OF LOUIS XV.

I. LOUIS XV. IN 1768 79

II. THE BEGINNINGS OF THE COUNTESS DU BARRY 91

WJR 19 FEB '36

CHAPTER		PAGE
III.	The Triumphs of the Countess Du Barry	97
IV.	Madame Louise of France, Carmelite Novice...	105
V.	The Childhood of Marie Antoinette	115
VI.	Marie Antoinette's Arrival in France.....	125
VII.	The Marriage Festivities of Marie Antoinette	135
VIII.	The Dauphiness and the Royal Family in 1770.	143
IX.	Marie Antoinette and Madame Du Barry.....	149
X.	The Dauphiness and Maria Theresa.....	162
XI.	The Pavilion of Luciennes.....	177
XII.	The Death of Louis XV.	188

EPILOGUE

The Scaffold of Madame Du Barry..... 199

LAST YEARS OF LOUIS XV

LAST YEARS OF LOUIS XV.

INTRODUCTION

TO live the life of the dead, to study an epoch thoroughly, to identify one's self with personages and become familiar with their habits, ideas, passions, tastes, fashions, prejudices, is a sort of metempsychosis, an incarnation. To attain it, one must isolate himself from his own time, and, forgetting that he is himself, must imagine that he is another. At first one lends but slight attention to the details given by the memoirs of the times to which he wishes to transport himself, to the minutiæ of every sort which are only seen as through a glass. But after a while, you begin to be captivated by all these petty facts, this daily tittle-tattle, and the past assumes a second actuality. It seems as if you knew intimately the actors in the piece of which you are giving yourself a representation. You think you hear their voices and watch the play of their countenances, and you become the courtier of palaces, the holder of season tickets to theatres, the habitué of the salons you are seeking to revive.

This is what I should like to attempt for the last years of Louis XV., those six years which extend from the death of Marie Leczinska to that of the sovereign who is no longer styled the Well-Beloved except by antiphrasis. A period curious by its contrasts, its wavering struggle between the ancient régime which is approaching extreme old age, and the new which as yet exists only in embryo! French society, regretting nothing of the past, fearing nothing from the future, advances singing toward the abyss.

I fancy that instead of being an obscure man of letters of the nineteenth century, I am a courtier of the eighteenth; that I am present at Madame Du Barry's triumph, when Madame Louise of France takes the veil, and at the rising of that nascent star which is called Marie Antoinette. I love Versailles, where the monarchy, spite of its decline, has still some remaining prestige. But I greatly prefer Paris; Paris, capital of opinion, Paris, city of luxury, intelligence, pleasures. I live with the philosophers while mistrustful of their doctrines, whose bearings they do not comprehend well. The courtier of Louis XV. at Versailles, I am the familiar of the kings and queens of fashion at Paris. I visit the Marquise du Deffand without embroiling myself with Mademoiselle de Lespinasse. At the house of Madame Geoffrin I meet those great nobles, men of wit and taste, who, mingling with writers and artists, establish a fusion between aristocracy and literature, those foreign

diplomatists who seem ravished with French and Parisian civilization. I go to those delightful suppers where one forgets for an instant all that is sad, all that is morose, in existence, in order to think only of what is amiable and agreeable. When it suits me, I dabble a little in politics. When the Duke de Choiseul falls into disgrace, I pose as his courtier and go to inscribe my name on the Chanteloup column. The quarrels between the magistracy and royalty interest me, but I do not take them too seriously.

I see a society divided into two camps: the pessimists and the optimists, those who believe in the social peril and those who disbelieve. But the latter are in the majority. The former declare that if the altar is no longer solid, the throne cannot be so either. They regret the Jesuits. They loudly blame Voltaire. The future looks black to them. They are the prophets of misfortune.

The second smile if one expresses a fear. When they have pronounced the words justice, tolerance, equality, liberty, they think they have said all. They jeer at the Cassandras predicting public calamities, at the priests lamenting over unbelief, at Louis XV. contemplating with a sort of anxiety the portrait of Charles I., King of England. How could a loyal, chivalric nation such as the French make its king ascend a scaffold? Is not society every day becoming milder, more enlightened, more tolerant? Are not the old religious quarrels falling into obliv-

ion? Is not the nobility placing itself at the head of a liberal and generous movement? Are not the priests becoming as agreeable as worldly people? Is not instruction making progress daily? When had literature more prestige? When were liberal ideas, the taste for useful reforms, civilizing schemes, more fashionable? Is not science, which every day realizes new prodigies, uniting itself with philosophy to embellish, pacify, and regenerate the human species? And it is such a time as this that people would like to signalize as a period doomed to troubles, anarchy, sanguinary violence! "Away, ye tremblers!" cry the philosophers. "Away, retrograde men, who want to enchain and degrade humanity! Nothing will impede the diffusing light! Nothing, no, nothing will thwart the irresistible movement which is carrying France, and after France all Europe, toward progress, toward indefinite, illimitable perfection. Drop these pusillanimous arguments, imaginary alarms, infantine or senile terrors. The phantoms which disturb you will not frighten us. Your phantasmagoria makes us laugh. It is useless for you to raise your voices, and seek to intimidate us by your tragic threats and dismal predictions. Away, away, ye tremblers! The world moves; you will not stop it!"

I listen to this flow of fine words. But, I own, it does not quite convince me. I do not altogether believe in the nearness of the age of gold. After me the deluge, exclaimed, or so they say, Louis XV. in the boudoir of the Du Barry. Louis XV. forebodes no

good of the future. Perhaps he is right. And I, who am carried away by the vortex of the world, I who lead this unquiet, feverish, brilliant life of the city and the court, of salons and boudoirs, academies and theatres, who go to all the suppers, all the first nights, all the entertainments, I, the friend of all the great nobles, all the celebrated men, all the fashionable beauties, I also, like the old King, have my hours of sadness and discouragement. At times all these men and women whom I meet seem to me, as they do to the old Marquise de Deffand, "machines on springs, which go and come, talk and laugh, without thinking, without reflecting, each playing his part by mere custom." Yes, people of the world, impassioned on the surface, indifferent at heart, malicious conversations which are the aliment of jealousy and idleness, insipid gallantry the parody of passion, everlastingly renewed discussions on love and friendship by persons who have never known and never will know anything but the theory of either sentiment, artificial, egotistic, glacial combinations of the life of salons, there are moments when you weary me, when I hold you in horror. There are moments when I say to myself: What will this philosophic fury result in? What will be built upon so many ruins? What will the throne be without the altar, the nobility without the clergy? How will this Babel which they call the Encyclopedia end? And what real melancholy lies underneath this apparent gaiety! What inanity, what wretched-

ness! What bitterness at the bottom of these cups of crystal! What thorns among these roses! What cares in these powdered heads! Brilliant beauties, how your painted cheeks are wrinkling with anxiety! Eighteenth century, century so proud of thy wit, thine audacity, thy pretended progress, century of philosophers, of learned ladies, of noble artists, of all-powerful litterateurs, century of Rousseau and Voltaire, Diderot and Helvétius, eighteenth century which art approaching thy term, what will thy closing years be like? . . . But I will banish gloomy presentiments. I will exclaim with Horace Walpole: "I laugh, that I may not weep. I play with monkeys, dogs, and cats, that I may not be devoured by the beast of Gévaudan." Let us taste, then, while there still is time, the sweetness of feeling and living. This society which has so many defects, so many vices, but also so many charms and attractions, let us examine it without complaisance and without anger. The court, the city, the nobility, the clergy, the magistracy, the middle class, the people, the philosophers, the literary men, the artists, the women, above all the women, let us watch them filing by in turn, the actors and supernumeraries of a comedy which will end, and very soon perhaps, in the most pathetic and lugubrious of all dramas. . . . The new world is advancing. Let us cast a final glance at the old one.

FIRST PART

THE COURT AND THE CITY AT THE END OF THE REIGN OF LOUIS XV.

I

THE KING

AT the close of the reign of Louis XV. the court is out of fashion. The same etiquette, the same names, the same distinctions, are still beheld there. But the King is old; what is more, the King is ridiculous. His passion for a nobody, a Du Barry, has something about it that is absurd and painfully grotesque. Versailles no longer makes people tremble; it makes them smile. They jeer at the amorous monarch who is playing a superannuated pastoral with a courtesan. No one now takes seriously the *Well-Beloved of the Almanac*, as he is still ironically called. A joker circulated, 1771, the following *pater*, dedicated to His Most Christian Majesty: "Our father who art at Versailles, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom is overcome, thy will is done no more on earth than it is in heaven. Give us our daily bread which you have taken from us; pardon your parliaments which have upheld our interests, as you pardon your ministers who have sold them. Do not succumb to the temptations of the Du Barry, but deliver us from that devil of a chancellor."

The scenery of Versailles is not changed, however. The gentlemen on duty fulfil their functions with as much assiduity as of old. The King's levee continues to be a piece in five acts, where the courtiers make their appearance like ballet dancers of the highest class. There are always the *familiar entries*, when the just-awakened King is still in his bed; the *grand entries*, when he has just risen and is in his dressing-gown; then that which is called the *entry of the chamber*, when he is in his armchair, in front of his dressing-table; and finally, the *general entry*, that of the stream of courtiers who have been waiting since daybreak in the Gallery of Mirrors. Versailles is always that city of eighty thousand souls which is replenished, peopled, occupied, by the life of a single man, that essentially royal city which is marvellously arranged so as to provide for the pleasures, the guard, the society, and the exhibition of the sovereign. The immortal race of courtiers is continually recruited by compliant and clever men who, on being presented at court, have received and obeyed this counsel: "You have only three things to do: speak well of everybody, ask for everything that is not taken, and sit down when you can." But, in spite of their irreproachable attitude, all these courtiers resemble priests who no longer believe in their god. They still burn incense at the feet of the idol, as a matter of custom, but the idol hardly creates the vestige of an illusion. Etiquette, which subsists in all its rules and its minutiæ, is still in usage, but it is no

longer a religion. Prestige has vanished. One cannot find another Dangeau, another De Luynes. Money, moreover, that nerve of courts, is becoming scarcer. Horace Walpole wrote, July 30, 1771:—

"The distress here is incredible, especially at court. The King's tradesmen are ruined, his servants starving, and even angels and archangels cannot get their pensions and salaries, but sing 'Woe! woe! woe!' instead of Hosannahs. Compiègne is abandoned; Villiers Coterêts and Chantilly[1] crowded, and Chanteloup[2] still more in fashion, whither everybody goes that pleases; though, when they ask leave, the answer is, 'Je ne le défends ni le permets.' This is the first time that ever the will of a king of France was interpreted against his inclination. Yet, after annihilating his Parliament, and ruining public credit, he tamely submits to be affronted by his own servants. Madame de Beauveau, and two or three high-spirited dames, defy this Czar of Gaul."

Walpole is careful to add that there is nothing very serious in the opposition of these ladies. "It must be said, they and their cabals have as little consistency as their party. They make epigrams, chant vaudevilles against the favorite, distribute pamphlets against Chancellor Maupeou, but all that has no more effect than a shot in the air."

[1] Residences of the Duke of Orleans and the Prince of Condé, then in disgrace for having taken sides with the former Parliament against that of Chancellor Maupeou.

[2] The Duke de Choiseul's place of exile.

To sum up, people still preserve for the King, if not affection and respect,—respect and affection ceased to exist long ago,—at least a certain indulgence. One excuses this old man as one would excuse a spoiled child. He has done harm, but on the other hand, he has done good. He has lost the colonies, but he has annexed Lorraine and Corsica to France. He has resisted powerful coalitions. He is the victor of Fontenoy. His aged arm has been able to strike the Parliament, and this *coup d'État* puts off the cataclysm for several years. Louis XV., devotee and debauchee, dissatisfied with others and with himself, a mixture of feebleness and energy, of heedlessness and judgment,—Louis XV., possessing still a certain dignity, politeness, and well-bred calm, a noble and kingly aspect,—Louis XV., perhaps still more to be pitied than blamed, remains a type of the ancient régime, an incarnation of that monarchy which, despite its visible decadence, has still its vestiges of grace and decorum, of force and authority. He is a debauchee. But he is in fact neither better nor worse than many old Celadons, many veterans of Cythera, many superannuated seducers who would think themselves absolutely dead if they had no more mistresses. Learned magistrates themselves play their pranks. They have their little houses, enlarged boudoirs, temples of voluptuous pleasure. The epicurean eighteenth century is only half displeased with royal debauchery. They scoff at it, and the monarchical principle is

stricken far less by violent attacks than by an arm possibly more to be dreaded,—that of ridicule. When, at Mass in the chapel of Versailles, I see Louis XV. praying very seriously in the royal tribune, not far from his unworthy favorite, who is there without rouge or powder, without even having made her toilette, I can scarcely keep from shrugging my shoulders.

As to the old King, quite proud of his victory over Parliament, he thinks this stroke has assured him a long and peaceable old age. In his previsions he allots himself several more years of pleasure. Then, he tells himself, will come the time of repentance and penance and true piety, when he will be the Most Christian King in more than name. How many old men there are who thus put off the hour of final conversion, while displaying an interior respect for religion very slightly hypocritical! This half-piety, this rough sketch of virtue, this penitence in the shape of contingent future, we find in many souls. What is feebler, more inconsistent, than human nature? We elbow men like Louis XV. at every step. All, or nearly all, the lady-killers resemble the lover of the Du Barry when they grow old, and there are few of them who, while still retaining their health and plenty of money, consent to become hermits, no matter what their age.

The dominant sentiment with regard to the King is not hatred, but indifference. People are going to let him die peaceably, and will behold, without anger

and without emotion, the setting of this wintry sun, devoid of warmth and radiance. Those who are impatient long for a new reign. Those who are wiser think the future Louis XVI. too young. After all, Louis XV., in spite of his errors, faults, and vices, is a man of experience, a man of government. And when will the Dauphin know anything? How much time does he not need in order to learn the most elementary principles of the difficult art of reigning? He may have excellent intentions, he will be honest and virtuous. But this is not enough. The task will be too heavy a one for young shoulders. And hence Maria Theresa, that woman of genius, that sure-eyed sovereign, fears nothing so much as the death of the decried monarch, Louis XV. As king if not as man, the old man is still preferable to the child.

II

THE NOBILITY

THERE are two parties among the nobles: the conservatives and the liberals, the men of the past and the men of the future. The first declare for the alliance of the throne and the altar, respect for all ancient usages, and the absolute maintenance of etiquette. Irreconcilable adversaries of philosophy, Anglomania, and the Encyclopedia, they regard the changes in costume, the abandonment of liveries, the vogue of foreign fashions, with annoyance and contempt. The second, uniting to the advantages of patrician rank the convenient charms of independence, joyfully adopt the cabriolets, the frock coats, the simplicity of English dress. They applaud republican tirades at the theatres, the subversive discourses of the academies, the anti-Christian theories of the philosophers. They speak of the old social edifice as Gothic architecture. Their rank and privileges, the débris of their former puissance, are being undermined beneath their feet. What of it? This "little war," as Count de Ségur says, pleases and diverts them. They do not feel its attacks as

yet; they only see the spectacle. Slaves of fashion, they go to pay court to D'Alembert, Diderot, Marmontel, Raynal, a word of praise from whom they prefer to the favor of a prince of the blood. Equality begins to make its appearance in the world. On many occasions, literary tables take precedence over those of nobility. In high society one often sees second or third rate literary men treated with a consideration and attention not obtained by provincial nobles. But let no one be deceived — all this democratic, almost republican machinery, is as yet simply an optical illusion. Ancient usage, as the same liberal Count de Ségur again affirms, preserves between the nobility and the middle classes an immense interval which even men of the most distinguished talents cross in appearance rather than in reality. There is more familiarity than equality. The great trees which are unconsciously losing their roots are still very proud of their foliage. Family splendors, great households, feudal existences, attributes of power, all seem vivacious and eternal. The classes of the old social order, with their hierarchy, their luxury, their blazons, their riches and power, are like "those brilliant pictures formed of a thousand colors and traced with sand on the crystals of our festivities, wherein one may admire magnificent castles, gay landscapes, and rich harvests, which the lightest breath would be enough to efface and cause to disappear."

Do not believe, moreover, that the nobility, in

spite of its decadence, has lost its former prestige. No, it is still elegant, loyal, full of courtesy and politeness. The most insignificant of the provincial gentry preserve their traditions. They have frequented the salons of the commandant or intendant, they have met on a visit some ladies of Versailles. Hence they all have some inkling of the changes in dress and fashion. "The most uncivilized of them accompanies his departing guests, hat in hand, to the foot of his front steps, thanking them for the honor they have done him. The most clownish, being near a woman, furbishes up from the depths of his memory some remnant of chivalrous gallantry. The poorest and most retired is careful of his coat of 'king's-blue' and his cross of St. Louis so that he may, on occasion, pay his respects to the neighboring great lord or the prince on his travels."[1] The nobles of the court, too futile, dissipated, and Voltairean, must not cause us to forget the provincial nobles who live quietly, collected, austere, respecting principles, usages, and dogmas, enduring an honorable poverty without complaint, unwilling to go begging favors at Versailles, and preparing in retreat to support nobly the storms whose approach they forebode already.

[1] M. Taine, *Les Origines de la France Contemporaine.*

III

THE CLERGY

JUST as we find in the ranks of aristocracy, at the side of a court nobility too often corrupt and frivolous, a provincial nobility which guards faithfully the traditions of honor and the austere virtues, so at the side of worldly prelates there are honest, convinced, venerable priests who continue to edify the country. In the clergy, as in the nobility, I distinguish the rich and the poor, the unbelieving and the faithful, the men who give scandal and the men of good will. Doubtless there are many reforms to make, many abuses to suppress. The princes of the Church, possessors of feudal rights, heirs or successors of the ancient prince-sovereigns of the country, the hundred and thirty-one bishops and archbishops, the seven hundred commendatory abbés, with their worldly airs, their opulence, their great households, are not all models. I could name more than one prelate who not only has mistresses, clients, guests, a levee, an antechamber, ushers, and offices, but who completes his resemblance to the great nobles by having debts. The Marquis de Mirabeau

wrote in 1766: "It would be an insult to offer a curacy to the majority of ecclesiastics with pretensions. Revenues and distinction are for commendatory abbés, for clergymen who have only received the tonsure, for the numerous chapters." There are prelates who have an income of half a million. People talk of one bishop's hunting-equipage, of another's confessionals hung with satin, of the kitchen utensils in solid silver belonging to a third. In salons and boudoirs I constantly meet these court abbés, who have nothing of the priest about them but the habit, and who do not always wear that,—anacreontic abbés, flatterers of great ladies, admirers of the philosophers, newsmongers, makers of little verses. But these are not the true clergy. The true clergy are found in the modest presbyteries of towns, and especially of villages. Yes, if I know the pompous aristocratic prelate, man of the world, man of the salon, man of the court, mounting more willingly the marble staircases of Versailles than the steps of the altar, I also know the humble, poor, resigned priest, the man of devotion, duty, sacrifice, abnegation, the man of God. If I meet the bishop proud of his gold cross, I also salute the country curate who goes, staff in hand, several leagues on foot through mud and snow. Doubtless there are certain convents of women whose profane aspect makes them resemble aristocratic circles, meeting-places for elegant society. But on the other hand there are veritable convents, holy and

religious asylums. One of the daughters of Louis XV., Madame Louise of France, has become a Carmelite, and the Carmelites make no compromise with austerity. There exist, I admit it, certain preachers more intent on the Encyclopedia than on the Gospel, who resemble academicians more than priests. There are, I am told, some who forget to make the sign of the cross when they enter the pulpit, omit all prayer, and turn their sermon into a sort of lecture. Bachaumont tells us that this is called preaching *à la* Greek. But, on the other hand, there are energetic, convinced preachers, in whose eloquent mouths the sacred terrors of doctrine are not enfeebled, men of faith and courage who, like the Apostles, exclaim when confronted with scandal: "It is impossible not to speak. *Non possumus non loqui.* In a piously audacious sermon, the Bishop of Alais, dividing society into two classes, that which has all and that which has nothing, asks why so enormous a privilege is excused by so little virtue. One day the Abbé de Beauvais, preaching in the chapel of Versailles in presence of the King, censures the shameful life of libertines. At the close of the sermon, Louis XV., apostrophizing Marshal de Richelieu, said to the old coxcomb: "Eh! Marshal, it seems to me the preacher has been throwing a good many stones into your garden." — "Yes, Sire," returned the sly courtier, "and some of them even bounced over into the park of Versailles." Still, the evangelical tradition continues in spite of

everything. Even in the most relaxed, corrupt, perverse epochs, there are always hidden treasures, inexhaustible sources of charity and virtue, if not on the surface at least in the depths of Christianity. No, no, messieurs the philosophers, do not confound the Church, the holy Church, with certain simoniacal priests and contraband abbés who are her reproach. Reckon up how many faithful servants of Christ, helpers of the poor, consolers of the afflicted, there yet remain in cities and country places, in every town and village. True, there have been great scandals, abuses from which Christian souls have suffered profoundly. Nevertheless, when the hour of supreme crisis shall arrive, you will see how many priests will know how to die like martyrs, like the early Christians. You who think the clergy ended, will soon be astonished at the number of its heroic and intrepid men. When the tempest comes, you will recognize the worth and ability of this clergy. You think now that the Church has grown old. Well, she will grow young again if need be, in persecution. She will have her second baptism, if that is necessary, which will efface all stains; it will be the baptism of blood!

IV

THE MAGISTRACY

I SEE the same contrasts in the magistracy as in the nobility and the clergy. Beside magistrates of the old stamp, grave, austere, preserving the tradition and sentiment of duty, the consciousness of professional dignity, I encounter with regret epicurean and Voltairean magistrates, men of intrigue and pleasure, light, superficial, partisans of revolutionary ideas, preparing unawares the downfall of the throne as well as the altar, and not even suspecting the weight of the blows they are aiming at them. It is only in appearance that they uphold justice. In reality they are nothing but agents of dissolution. They do not even trouble themselves to be hypocrites. The same men who break Calas on the wheel and decapitate La Barre, place Voltaire's *La Pucelle* on the tables of their drawing-rooms, and are the guests and flatterers of materialists and atheists. If a book is condemned to be burned, the condemnation makes the magistrates who pronounce it smile. "Injunctions are decried," says Bachaumont, "a witticism refutes a sermon, and if Parliament med-

dles with it, they glory in the honors of the burning. It is no longer a punishment, but an advertisement. Moreover, do not fancy that the executioner of lofty works has permission to throw into the fire the books whose names appear in the decree of the court. Messieurs would be very sorry to deprive their libraries of a copy of each of these works to which they have a legal right, and the clerk of the court substitutes for them some pettifogging parchments of which there is never any lack."[1]

Those members of the judiciary who hold a middle rank between the higher nobility and the middle classes, who are rich, influential, and allied to the most powerful families in France; those great nobles of the robe each of whom has his little Versailles, a fine house between court and garden, and who are to the magistracy what the prelates are to the clergy; these parliamentary leaders gradually become the most redoubtable enemies of the monarchy. Louis XV. has them in horror. Ever since the time of Madame de Pompadour he has considered them his most dangerous enemies. "Those long robes and the clergy," he said one day to the favorite, "are always at drawn swords; they torment me by their quarrels; but I detest the long robes far the most. My clergy at bottom are attached to me and loyal; the others would like to tutor me. . . . The Regent was much to blame for giving them the right to make remon-

[1] Grimm, *Correspondance littéraire*, 1770.

strances; they will end by ruining the State." — "Ah! Sire," remarked M. de Gontaut, "it is rather too strong for petty lawyers to overthrow." — "You do not know what they are doing nor what they can do," resumed the King; "it is an assembly of republicans. Enough of that, however. Things will last as long as I do."[1]

Disorder exists already in the ruling classes. Montesquieu has written it: "There are three estates in France, the Church, the sword, and the robe. Each of them has a sovereign contempt for the two others." One of Louis XV.'s ministers of foreign affairs, the Marquis d'Argenson, has foretold what must be the certain end of this régime of divisions and perpetual conflicts of power. "Who," he writes, "will decide this question in the future, to wit, whether despotism will increase or diminish in France? For my part, I hold for the advent of the second article, and even for republicanism. Louis XV. has not known how to govern either tyrannically or like a good republican leader; now, here, when one takes neither one rôle nor the other, woe to royal authority. . . . The peoples have grown very fond of parliaments, seeing in them the only remedy for the vexations they endure from another quarter. All this points to some revolt which is smouldering under the ashes." In 1752 the same Marquis d'Argenson had traced these prophetic lines: "The bad results of our government by abso-

[1] Memoirs of Madame du Hausset.

lute monarchy have succeeded in convincing France and all Europe that it is the very worst kind of government. I do not mean the same thing as the philosophers, who say that anarchy itself would be preferable. However, the opinion is growing and making its way, and that may bring about a national revolution."

A noisy and active revolution is forming itself against the Church in the very bosom of Catholicism, and against royalty in that of the magistracy and the parliamentarian middle classes. A sort of league is established between all the parliaments of France, which consider themselves as the different groups of a single assembly, the several members of an invisible body. Louis XV., energetic at times, awakes from his torpor and comprehends the necessity of striking a great blow. During the night of January 19, 1771, all the members of the Paris Parliament who, through a spirit of opposition, were refusing to render justice, are arrested in their beds and summoned to give a plain yes or no to an order requiring them to resume their ordinary functions. They answer no, and are sent into exile. The people remain quiet, and the dissolved Parliament gives place without resistance to the new Maupeou Parliament, so called from the name of the chancellor. Louis XV. thinks himself more powerful than Louis XIV., the chancellor stronger than Richelieu. Madame de Pompadour had overthrown the Jesuits. Madame Du Barry has overthrown the parliamentarians; in other words, the

Jansenists. The rival parties, Jesuits and Jansenists, having disappeared, would not one suppose that the absolute monarchy would remain standing alone above their ruins? But that is merely an optical illusion. The Maupeou Parliament is discredited, and power sustains it but feebly. It allows the affair of Beaumarchais against Counsellor Goëzman, — an affair so trifling in itself but so important on account of the noise it makes, — to take truly incredible proportions. The terrible and dramatic Polish question preoccupies Versailles and Paris less than the wretched quarrel between the author of the *Barber of Seville* and one of his judges, or rather, the wife of one of them.

What was it all about? To know whether the wife of a counsellor of Parliament had or had not kept fifteen louis received from a litigant. Why, then, such passion and excitement in the public? Why this feverish anxiety, this mad curiosity with which all Paris, all France, follows the vicissitudes of this trial? Because the affair is symbolical. What is at stake is less the Goëzman household than the whole Maupeou Parliament. It is the magistracy that I see on the prisoner's bench, and not Beaumarchais. It is the accused who, by an inversion of rôles, appears as counsel for the King, — what do I say? — as counsel for that new power, opinion. His statements are the public prosecutor's speeches. The cause is as much political as judicial. The old social edifice is cracking and undermined on every side.

All the springs of the old machine are out of order. And instead of lamenting over this, the privileged classes do nothing but laugh. The Goëzman trial is a comedy which entertains the boxes as much as it does the pit. I am not sure that Louis XV. himself, hard as it is to divert him, is not cheered up by it. It certainly amuses Madame Du Barry extremely. She has charades at her house in which Madame Goëzman and Beaumarchais are confronted with each other. Beaumarchais is the centre of all eyes, the fashionable man, the hero of the day. "I am afraid," writes Voltaire, "that this brilliant fellow may be in the right against everybody. . . . His naïveté enchants me "(the naïveté of Beaumarchais!). "I forgive him his imprudence and petulance."

The conclusion of the most serious act or the most important treaty of peace would be awaited with less impatience than the issue of this trial, which preoccupies, if one can believe it, both peoples and kings, — so entirely does France, in spite of her decline, retain in the last years of Louis XV. the privilege of concentrating the attention of all Europe on what is passing within her borders. "Judgment at last!" . . . as says the Chicaneau in Racine's *Plaideurs*. February 26, 1774, after seven months of waiting, the sentence is pronounced. Madame Goëzman is condemned to formal censure (*le blâme*) and to the restitution of the fifteen louis, which are to be distributed among the poor. Beaumarchais is also condemned to censure. *Le blâme* is not a slight penalty, but

an infamous one, a penalty which renders him who is stricken by it incapable of fulfilling any public function; the condemned receives the sentence kneeling, in presence of the court, while the president says to him: "The court censures thee and declares thee infamous." Well! the man whom the Maupeou Parliament thinks it can thus stamp with infamy, is a victor; all Paris goes to leave cards at the house of the condemned man. The Prince de Conti and the Duke de Chartres give him a brilliant entertainment the day after sentence is decreed. M. de Sartines says to him: "One should be modest even though one has been censured." The opposition, silenced for a moment, starts up anew. A rain of pamphlets and diatribes begins against this Maupeou Parliament which, by inflicting civil death on a man upheld by public opinion, has given itself a mortal blow. Its days, like those of the old King, are numbered. As to Louis XV., judging Beaumarchais from the address just displayed by this clever man in the Goëzman trial, he intrusts him with a secret mission to England. When discordances like these exist in any society, catastrophes are not far distant.

V

THE MIDDLE CLASSES

CURIOUS thing! The revolution does not start from below, but from above. The classes which suffer and are hungry are resigned and silent. The privileged classes, those who gorge themselves with gold and pleasures in the midst of public distress, are those that complain and make an uproar. The higher up you go on the social ladder, the less faith and virtue do you find. The people are better than the middle classes, the middle classes better than the nobility, the provincial nobles better than those of the court, the lower clergy superior to the prelates. One might say that, morality being in an inverse ratio to rank, the most dangerous adversaries of society are the very persons who have most to lose if it succumbs. The great proprietors are demolishing their houses and castles. The prelates are sapping the foundations of the churches. The princes of the blood are shaking down the throne. Thus it is that the so-called defenders of the social fortress are spiking their cannons, destroying their ramparts, dampening their powder, breaking their

weapons, and will end by delivering the key of the citadel to the enemy.

A large majority of the middle classes are still resisting the inroads of impiety. In Paris and the provinces they say: "Without monarchy and the Church, no government." In religion and politics, even if they are on the side of the opposition, they do not go beyond the liberties of the Gallican Church and the constitutional guaranties demanded by the parliaments. Even though they have ceased to love and esteem Louis XV., they continue to respect royalty in his person. Dignified, calm, reflective, they will neither make war on the nobles nor pay them court. As to the monarchy, they consider it as a dogma, an article of faith. Citizen Regnaud thus expresses himself: "It is a law of the State, consecrated in every age by the Divine law, to respect the sovereign even when he causes the unhappiness of the peoples confided to him by Providence. God forbid that I should undertake to infringe this sacred law in the history I am writing."[1]

Another citizen, Prosper Hardy, makes the following declaration in his Memoirs: "Although I have never regarded myself as other than an atom in society, I think I deserve a distinguished place there by my inviolable fidelity to my sovereign and my love for his sacred person. The sentiments I imbibed

[1] Manuscript Memoirs of Regnaud, procureur to the Parliament of Paris at the time of the *coup d'État* of 1771.

from books and education will never be effaced from my heart. Albeit my fortune, by the will of Divine Providence, is of the most modest sort, a prospective income of a hundred thousand *écus* would not cause me to forsake a boon which is dear to me and of which I cannot be deprived; to wit, honor and true patriotism. I shall always believe it my duty to think concerning the present controversies as the first magistrates of the realm do and the princes of the royal blood, who have manifested their sentiments toward our august master in a manner as authentic as respectful, and in a formal protest to which no good citizen can avoid paying homage and subscribing with all his soul."[1] The opposition still remained dynastic. It enveloped itself in forms most deferential toward the person and authority of the sovereign. Hardy blames the ministers for the harm that has been done, without accusing Louis XV. He complains of despotism, never of the King.

If in the depths of the provinces one finds ancient manors and dungeon keeps blackened by time wherein dwell austere and worthy nobles, proud of their ancestors and their poverty, one also finds, even in worldly, frivolous Paris, old houses which shelter worthy people, peaceable *bourgeois*, citizens of their quarter, frequenters of their parish church, members of their corporation, who still lead a calm and patri-

[1] Manuscript Memoirs of Siméon Prosper Hardy.

archal existence. Their life glides uniformly by, "developing like a captive stream its predetermined course, without ever losing sight of the shadow of the natal bell-tower, the church where rest the pious souvenirs of the family, and where the same half-open tomb awaits the generations. Between this ever-present term and this point of departure which is drawing near, the regulated forms of professional duty take possession of the man, occupy his soul, and replenish the capacity of his spirit."[1]

The religious sentiment is still dominant, even at Paris, in the middle classes and the people. In February, 1766, Louis XV. is crossing the Pont-Neuf after leaving a bed of justice he has just held at the Parliament. A priest carrying the Viaticum passes in front of the cortège. The King alights from his carriage and kneels down. This mark of devotion causes enthusiastic admiration in the crowd, and cries of "Long live the King!" resound from every side with more than ordinary enthusiasm.

The citizen class is still Christian and royalist. But let no one be deceived. It also threatens to become revolutionary. Certain characteristic symptoms are beginning to make their appearance. The law clerks sometimes assume the aspect of demagogues, and a nameless breath of democracy often pervades the pits of theatres. I see an impatient youth springing up amid the middle classes which

[1] M. Charles Aubertin, *L'Esprit public au XVIIIe siècle.*

will bring all the turmoil of the new spirit into the old settings of a disorganized society. The opposition will increase by degrees, coming down from one social layer to another, from the princes of the blood to the popular masses who are as yet untouched.

VI

THE PEOPLE

DO you see, in country places, a sort of wild animal, male and female, "black, livid, and scorched by the sun, attached to the earth which they dig and turn over with invincible obstinacy? They have a kind of articulate voice, and when they rise to their feet they show a human face, and in fact they are human beings. At night they retire into dens, where they live on bread, water, and roots. They spare other men the trouble of sowing, laboring, and reaping in order to live, and thus deserve not to lack some of the bread which they have sown."[1]

Do you see them, notwithstanding, "in frightful misery, without beds or furniture; the majority of them even lacking that bread of oats and barley which is their sole nourishment, and which they are obliged to tear from their own mouths and those of their children to pay the taxes"?[2] Do you see "these poor slaves, these beasts of burden fastened

---

[1] La Bruyère. [2] Massillon.

to a yoke, and whipped along"?[1] These unfortunates who in years of famine — years which frequently recur — eat grass like sheep and die like flies? Well, if one can believe it, they do not complain. They do not even think of complaining. Their sufferings and privations seem to them as natural as winter or the hail. They do not complain. Why not? Because if they have not the bread of the body, they at least have hope, the bread of the *soul*. Yes, the hope of heaven, the hope of an ideal world which hovers above the real one like a pavilion of gold above a filthy sewer, the hope of the true country where there are neither fatigues, nor tears, nor sorrows, — hope, their support, their consolation, their future; hope, that supreme good which the philosophers are determined at any cost to wrench from them! What they have left, and what the philosophers have no longer, is the sacred poesy of the Church, its hymns of sadness and of joy, the cycle of its feasts which vary and adorn the year. They have the steeple of their native village, the graveyard where their parents sleep and where they offer prayer, the crucifix, the image of the Man-God whose hands and feet and side they kiss while weeping. They have what you have not, men of the world and free-thinkers: the real good, the inestimable treasure, that which subsists entire even when the bell is ringing for the dying, that which death itself has

[1] The Marquis d'Argenson.

no power against: they have faith! The angels of Christ hover over each thatched cabin, the angels who, when the unfortunates would like to turn away from the chalice of bitterness, induce them to drink it calmly and with resignation even to the dregs!

Great lords and ladies, adepts of the Encyclopedia, savants and literary men, be careful! You mock, perhaps, at these poor people. You criticise what you call their ignorance, because they still worship as of old, because, in their simplicity, on All Saints' Day they lay a plate for the dead on their wretched tables. You deride them because when they have saved a few farthings they spend them, — for what? In order to burn some candles. Take care, — if they did not burn these candles which you sneer at, they would burn your houses, your castles. Don't flout these people who are and have little or nothing, who are the majority, and who would only have to crowd together in order to stifle you. Great philosophers, why do you not try to make your discoveries contribute somewhat to preserve that sacred object, the human soul, to wrest it from misery and cast it, consoled, pacified, elevated, into the bosom of God? Ah! why do you belong to that frightful race of men who injure souls? Why do you discourage the cabin where men die of hunger, the workshop where the proletarian, become a wheel of flesh in a machine, can no longer breathe the air of God nor be illumined by His sunshine? Take care! Take care! What will become of you on the day when these poor people

say to you, nobles: "You are men like others"; to you, prelates: "You are impostors." Take care! if your impious doctrines triumph, here are the workmen, the peasants, all the disinherited of fortune, who will cry to you in terrible voices: "No more resignation, vengeance! No more tears. Muskets, and if there are no muskets, pikes! And if there are no pikes, clubs! Enough of docility! Enough of patience! Enough of humility! Come on!" Madmen! Fools! It is you who have just said to them: "Poor wretch, you are awaiting life eternal to find at last a compensation for your sufferings. There is no eternal life. Poor wretch, you are amassing as if there were savings, your tears and sorrows, and those of your wife and your children, in the hope of bringing them after death to the foot of God's judgment seat. Well, there is no God!" Admirers of Helvétius, Baron d'Holbach, Diderot, great philosophic nobles, be on your guard! on the day when your unbelief shall have spread beyond your salons, your boudoirs, and academies, into the cabins of your peasantry, tremble, for that day will be the vengeance of heaven!

It is the people they lose sight of, and it is they above all who should never be forgotton. It is in them that a strong and intelligent royalty finds its fulcrum, its natural authority, and its moral prestige. It is the people who give their sweat and blood without a murmur. It is the people who in times of peace and times of war, in cities and country places and

on battle-fields, utter enthusiastically and with all the force of their robust lungs, the cry which sums up the unity of the country, the cry of loyalty and patriotism: Long live the King! Reforms are necessary. But it is not a Voltairean nobility and a magistracy honeycombed by the spirit of rebellion which can cause order and liberty to triumph. It is not a middle class which, after all, represents only a feeble minority. No. It is the people taken as a whole, that is to say the entire nation, which can be counted on for the work of true progress. The sovereign reformers have always relied on the people, not on the privileged classes. This is what is forgotten in the apartments of Versailles. People busy themselves with the surface of society, not with its depths. They think too much about the houses of the Faubourg Saint Germain, about academies, salons, castles, palaces of justice, and not enough about the garrets and thatched cabins, the devout and honest masses who would be such a powerful rampart for majesty against the invasions of a revolution half aristocratic, half middle class. There would be the rejuvenescence and the future of the monarchy. The King should appear not merely to the ruling classes, but to the mass of his subjects, as a protector, friend, and father. Louis XV. does not remember often enough that of all classes of society in the eighteenth century, the best, most worthy, most patriotic, is that of the poor, the humble, the workmen, peasants, and laborers. Among them is

found the basis of honesty, industry, and piety, the compensation for the scandals of the court and the city, beautiful souls under rude envelopes. There, if royalty comprehended the situation, it would find the consolidation of the throne and the welfare of the country.

VII

POLITICAL WOMEN

AT Versailles, Paris, and throughout the realm, the women are playing a part which constantly increases in importance. At Versailles they dominate Louis XV. and his ministers; at Paris they are the recognized arbiters of fashion, literature, and the arts. Throughout the realm they avenge themselves for the Salic law. In 1770 Collé wrote in his Memoirs: "The women have taken the upper hand so completely among the French, they have subjugated the men so completely that they no longer think or feel except in accordance with them." Not all the influential women are coquettish, light, superficial, the women of Marivaux. Some of them are frivolous, but others are serious. There are religious women, mothers in Israel, friends of the Jesuits, irreconcilable enemies of the Encyclopædia — such women as the Princess de Marsan, who in association with Madame de Talmont, Madame de Noailles, and the Duke de Nivernais, directs what is called the devout party. There are philosophical women, eaten up by the new fanaticism of irre-

ligion, who plunge head foremost, with all the enthusiasm and passion of their sex, into the abyss of novel doctrines. There are scientific women, who assimilate with curious facility the surface of the most arduous sciences, and manage a compass as easily as a fan, who place dictionaries of natural history and treatises on physics and chemistry in their boudoirs beside a little altar dedicated to Benevolence or Friendship, and who no longer have themselves painted as alluring goddesses on clouds, but as grave and meditative muses sitting in a laboratory amidst squares and telescopes. There are political women, pupils of Rousseau, admirers of the *Contrat Social*, who dream of being the Egerias of future Numas, of changing their armchairs into tribunes, and their salons into clubs, who ardently praise the parliamentary system of the other side of the Channel, and declaim like good citizenesses — the word begins to be in fashion — against the excesses and turpitudes of the absolute régime. They want to pass for energetic women (energy is another word becoming acclimated in the language of high society). They pose as patricians of ancient Rome, impassioned for liberty. Grave accents proceed from their delicate mouths. Eloquent protests against despotism issue from the depths of boudoirs hung with satin. These liberal great ladies, a new type in French society, make Gustavus III. of Sweden the confidant of their wrath against Louis XV. Read the letters of the

habitual correspondents of the Swedish monarch, Mesdames d'Egmont, de La Marck, de Croy, de Boufflers, de Mesmes, de Luxembourg, and see with what vigor of thought and vehemence of style these ladies express themselves.[1]

The beautiful and spiritual Countess d'Egmont, as grave as her father, Marshal de Richelieu, is frivolous, a charming woman, fated to an early death, whose melancholy and whose sufferings inspire such interest, how violent, bitter, indignant, is her language concerning the Du Barry's aged lover! "How can one endure," she writes to Gustavus, "that he who has enjoyed the celestial happiness of being passionately adored, and who would still be so if he had left us the least illusion, should please himself by destroying every one of them and look on such a change with coolness?" Again she writes to the King of Sweden, June 27, 1771: "Sire, they say you have asked for a portrait of Madame Du Barry. They even go so far as to say that you have written to her. I have denied it at all events; but it has been maintained against me so positively that I entreat you to authorize me to deny it again. . . . No, that could not be." And November 26, 1771: "I ask again for an answer about Madame Du Barry's portrait. Deign to give me your word of honor that you have not and never will have it, for I am greatly pressed to offer you mine." Madame de Boufflers wrote such sentences as

[1] *Gustave III. et la cour de France*, by M. A. Geffroy.

these to Gustavus: "Absolute power is a mortal disease, which by insensibly corrupting the moral qualities, ends by destroying states. . . . The actions of sovereigns are submitted to the censure of the universe. . . . France is ruined if the present administration lasts."

The Countess de La Marck draws this picture of society in a letter to the King of Sweden: "Our young women are bursting with wit; as for reason, it is hardly mentioned. They are all initiated into State secrets, they meddle with everything, and make love by way of pastime. . . . Certain bureaus of wit where people mock at God and religion, and consider those who believe imbeciles, such, in short, Sire, is a sketch of our situation. No more emulation, no more principles; even to the theatres everything is going wrong. We still have one or two sculptors and three or four painters. The jeweller's trade prospers of course; but it will soon come to a standstill, for no one buys anything now but brilliants; to be sure, they do not pay for them. In a word, we are as low down as we can get, and shall be lucky if no one attacks us, for I do not know what would become of us."

The impulse is given. Henceforward the women will be in opposition to power. It is the current; one must go with it. The principal salons of Paris are so many clubs hostile to the King. Politics invades everything. Besenval says: "Assemblies of society and pleasure have become petty States-Gen-

eral, where the women, transformed into legislators, lay down maxims on public law and settle principles with the audacity and assurance imparted by the wish to dominate and make themselves observed, a desire heightened still further by the importance of the matter and its celebrity. . . ." It must not be believed, however, that the majority of these eloquent stateswomen, descanting at random on the respective rights of the throne and the magistracy, on absolute power and liberty, renounce on that account the ways and habitudes of coquetry, of what is called love. Suspect these women, serious only in appearance. Politics is the pretext. The gist of the business is gallantry.

VIII

LOVE

OF all loves, the rarest in high society under the reign of Louis XV. is conjugal love. Well-bred married couples are on the footing of polite and courteous strangers with each other. The husband calls his wife Madame. The wife calls her husband Monsieur. They live in the same house, but have separate apartments and do not visit each other without being previously announced. Never do they ride in the same carriage. Never are they met in the same salon. A husband who should follow his wife would be treated as a jealous provincial. A woman who should have the singular idea of being in love with her husband would be thought ridiculous. Such a passion in good society would be indecorous. Conjugal love is altogether out of fashion. Baron de Besenval considers that though morals may suffer from this, society is an infinite gainer, adding that, "freed from the embarrassment and chill always caused by the presence of husbands, there is extreme liberty," and that "the coquetry of men and women maintains its vivacity and daily supplies piquant adventures."

Piquant adventures are what is specially sought for. Passion, people care little about; what they are looking for is pleasure. Listen to a great lady saying, in 1764, to young Lauzun, the future Lovelace, whose erotic education is not yet quite finished: "Believe me, little cousin, to be romantic doesn't succeed nowadays; it makes you ridiculous, and then it is all up with you. I have had a great fancy for you, my child; it is not my fault if you have taken it for a grand passion and persuaded yourself that it would never end. What does it matter to you, if this fancy is over, whether I take one for somebody else or remain without a lover? You have many advantages for pleasing women; use them for that purpose, and rest assured that the loss of one can always be repaired by another, — that is the way to be happy and amiable."[1] Such was fashionable morality. Chamfort defined love as "the exchange of two fantasies and the contact of two skins." People take and leave each other in precisely the same way. As Prince de Ligne said, one was happy *to have*, one was enchanted *to have* no longer.

Where is the time of profound passions, trembling avowals, of sighs and tears and fond despairs? Where is the time of heroic loves with their chivalrous respect, their long waiting, sublime devotion, eternal oaths, their tried devotion and tender gratitude, their virtues of grandeur and generosity? Look

[1] *Memoirs of the Duc de Lauzun.*

at the Cupid of the reign of Louis XV., the noisy, insolent, victorious Cupid, who scoffs at the love of former times as a malicious and ill-bred child mocks at an old man. Listen to him saying in a gibing tone: "Your lovers were mere blockheads, who only knew how to languish, say alas! and tell their troubles to the surrounding echoes. For my part, I have suppressed the echoes. . . . My subjects do not say: I am dying; nothing is half so much alive as they are. Languors, timidity, sweet martyrdom, are out of the question; all that is tame, a platitude of other days. . . . I don't put my subjects to sleep; I wake them up; they are so keen that they have no leisure to be tender; their glances are desires; instead of sighing, they attack; they do not say: Be propitious to me; they seize, and that is what is needed."[1] Listen to Madame d'Epinay, who speaks of modesty as a "beautiful virtue which one fastens on with pins." Listen to the century which boasts, like Crébillon the younger, of "having arrived at the truth of things," of having suppressed what it calls "exaggerations, affectations, grimaces." Do you see, in the picture of *La Chemise Enlevée*, Fragonard's little love who smilingly carries off the decency of woman? Do you hear Buffon himself, the grave, majestic Buffon, employing this materialistic language? "Why does love create the happy estate of all creatures and the misery of man? It is because only the physical side

[1] Marivaux, *La Réunion des Amours.*

of this passion is good; because the moral side is good for nothing."[1]

Hence it is an understood thing, proclaimed by the great savants of the century, that the prime essential is to suppress the moral part of love. Love is no longer represented except under the image of a pretty little naked god, flying about, and free. The enemies of constraint and waiting form a sect called the *anti-ceremonious*. Another aphrodisiacal corporation entitles itself the *Society of the Moment*. To choose the moment well is the tactics, the supreme art. "How many liaisons begin briskly by insolence in a carriage the coachman of which is particular about taking the longest road, to play deaf and to make the horses go slowly. The brutal style of gallantry ends by having principles, a sort of philosophy and means of excusing itself. . . . It finds wits to decide that a temerarious man has at bottom more deference for the woman than a timid one and really respects her more by sparing her the long torment of successive concessions."[2] To the lover who remains on his knees too long, the eighteenth century cries: "Get up, and take your mistress in your arms."

It is very perverted, very frivolous and guilty, this society of the time of Louis XV. They are very immoral, these gay grand ladies, these *patriciennes* of

[1] Buffon, *Discours sur la nature des animaux.*

[2] Messrs. de Goncourt, *L'Amour au XVIIIe Siècle*, a very witty and pleasant volume. Dentu.

libertinage, who love scandal for scandal's sake, and take a haughty pleasure in the loss of their reputation. Nevertheless, we must do them the justice of admitting that for the most part they retain, amid all their disorders, a quality lacking to many fashionable beauties in democratic times, — disinterestedness. One asks of the grand ladies of the eighteenth century, if not the virtues of the honest woman, at least her qualities. In the high society of these times love is immoral, indecent, full of effrontery, but still there is love. Doubtless it is not the lofty, magnanimous, inspired love of the heroines of the great Corneille or the tender Racine. It is not the ideal passion, purified by the spirit of sacrifice, by the ardent flame of enthusiasm. No, it is no longer that love. Nevertheless, it is still love, or, if it is so in appearance only, at least it is not a vile traffic.

Let us add, in order to be fair, that towards the close of the reign the level of sentiment begins to rise a little. The *Nouvelle-Héloïse* has created something new in the erotic manners of France; and if this novelty is at times declamatory, one cannot avoid recognizing also that it has a touch of spirituality.

No one now approves this remark of Buffon's: "Man in desiring to base himself on sentiment simply abuses his being and hollows out in his heart a void which nothing is able to replenish." The fashion has changed. The affectation of passion has been substituted for that of indifference. The man of sensibil-

ity, the lover to excess, makes his appearance in the isle of Cythera. Sensibility is the watchword, the word which expresses everything. In a gathering at the house of the Duchess de Chartres, the Countess de Blot declares "that unless of superior virtue, a woman really *sensitive* could refuse nothing to the passion of Rousseau." Irony, scepticism, were once the rule, but now it is enthusiasm. Declarations of love are either philosophic theses or tragic tirades. Every lover is an actor who declaims his part with emphasis, with attitudes, inflections of voices and attitudes studied beforehand. Henceforward the salon stage is monopolized by comic lovers, practised Don Juans, virtuosos of sentiment. "Before everything else they seek their own applause and are prouder to make their exit content with themselves than content with the woman. There are some who falsify their whole person, who paint their faces, unpowder their hair, who deprive themselves of wine in order to grow pale, and all in the hope of moving and affecting. There are even some who for a decisive rendezvous put on despair as one would put on rouge; they simulate the marks of half-dried tears on their cheeks with diluted gum arabic."[1] They boast of returning to nature, of admiring the country, of being compassionate and humane. Formerly it was the negation of love, now it is the parody of it.

[1] Messrs. de Goncourt.

IX

THE FAMOUS SALONS

THE principal salons of Paris are celebrated throughout all Europe. They lead the fashion. They are the arbiters of style. In them the women are sovereigns, guiding conversation and consequently opinion. The old style becomes the elegant interpreter of new ideas. What strikes one first of all in fashionable life at the close of Louis XV.'s reign is the increasing intimacy between the nobles and the men of letters. "The haughty Maréchale de Luxembourg always chooses La Harpe as her cavalier; he gives his arm so well, in fact. Not only does the plebeian enter the salon if he has good manners, but he lords it there if he has talent. The first place in conversation and even in public consideration is for Voltaire, the son of a notary; for Rousseau, the son of a clockmaker; for D'Alembert, a foundling picked up by a glazier."[1] Walpole considers that literature is taking up too much space in familiar conversation. "Literature is an excellent

[1] M. Taine, *Origines de la France contemporaine.*

amusement," he writes, "when one has nothing better to do; but in society it becomes pedantry, and is tiresome when paraded in public. The authors one meets everywhere are worse than their books, which is complimentary to neither. Usually the tone of conversation is solemn and pedantic, and people hardly seem to be amused unless they are disputing." This judgment is a trifle severe. After all, from the worldly point of view, it is still Paris which holds the sceptre, and foreign princes on their travels esteem it an honor to enter these salons whose prestige and brilliancy are universal.

The Maréchale de Luxembourg, whose first husband was the Duke de Boufflers, the heroine of the famous chanson, —

> "Quand Boufflers parut à la cour,
> On crut voir la mère d'Amour;
> Chacun s'empressait à lui plaire,
> Et chacun l'avait à son tour,"[1] —

the Maréchale de Luxembourg settled down as she advanced in years. "Aided by a great name, plenty of audacity, and especially by a fine house, she has succeeded in making people forget her light conduct and has established herself as sovereign arbiter of decorum, good taste, and those forms which make up

[1] When Boufflers appeared at court,
People thought they saw the mother of Love;
Every one was eager to please her,
And every one did so in his turn.

politeness. Her empire over young people of both sexes is absolute. She restrains the giddiness of the young women, forces them to a general coquetry, and obliges the young men to be prudent and respectful; in fine, she maintains the sacred fire of French urbanity; at her house the tradition of noble and easy manners which all Europe comes to Paris to admire and strives in vain to imitate, is strictly preserved. Never was a Roman censor more useful to the morals of the republic than the Maréchale de Luxembourg has been to the charm of society."[1] By wit and authority, by making herself listened to, and especially by making herself feared, the Maréchale has ended by inspiring more than consideration; to wit, respect. She exerts over the aristocratic, and even over the literary world, a redoubtable and despotic domination. A presentation at court no longer suffices. One must also be received by Madame the Maréchale de Luxembourg. Jean Jacques Rousseau himself, the irascible, morose Jean Jacques, is fascinated, as it were, by this veritably great lady. "Hardly had I seen her," he writes, "when I was subjugated. I found her charming, with that charm which is proof against time, the one most calculated to act upon my heart. I was expecting to find her conversation caustic and full of epigrams. It is not that, but something much better. The conversation of Madame de Luxembourg does not sparkle with

[1] Duke de Levis, *Souvenirs et portraits.*

wit. It has no sallies, and strictly speaking no subtlety, but it has an exquisite delicacy which never strikes and always pleases. Her flatteries are all the more intoxicating the simpler they are. One would say they escape her unawares, and that her heart overflows simply because it is over-full."

Another superior woman whose salon is an aristocratic and intellectual centre of the first order, firstly at Paris and Versailles and afterwards at Chanteloup, is the clever and virtuous Duchess de Choiseul, wife of the celebrated minister. "At a time when each coterie has its philosopher, who is as it were its director, Madame de Choiseul thinks for herself. Neither the irony of Voltaire nor the declamations of Rousseau disturb her sound sense and correct intelligence. She judges men and things sanely without permitting herself to be carried away by fashion or prejudice. One always finds in her an instructive taste for the grand and the beautiful. Hers is a noble nature, lovable at first sight, and in which one discovers every day some motive for loving it more."[1]

The Duchess de Choiseul will never be Rousseau's dupe. "He preaches a good morality," she writes concerning the author of the *Nouvelle-Héloise*, "a morality which we were acquainted with, for that matter, because there is but one; but he has drawn suspicious and dangerous conclusions from it, or has

[1] Prosper Mérimée, article in the *Moniteur Universel* of April 29, 1867.

put us in a position to do so by the way in which he has presented them. Always suspect metaphysics applied to simple things; happily for us, nothing is more simple than morality, and what is truest in this matter is what is nearest to us. *Do nothing to another that you would not have him do to you.* Everybody knows that, every one understands that. . . . There is no need of fine dissertations on moral good and evil, the origin of passions, prejudices, manners, etc., and the rest of that fine rigmarole with which these gentlemen fill the journals, the shops, and our libraries, in order to teach us what virtue is."

The Duchess de Choiseul considers Rousseau equally dangerous as a moralist and as a political publicist. "I admit," she adds, "that errors must necessarily creep into prejudices, as abuses do into laws; but to wish to destroy everything in order to correct them is as if one wanted to cut off a man's head to rid him of a few white hairs. . . . The employment of wit at the expense of public order is one of the greatest villainies. . . . That sort of crime is a seed, it is positively the bad grain of the Gospel. A true citizen would serve his country as best he could by his wit and talents, but would not go to writing about the social compact so as to make us suspect the legitimacy of governments and overwhelm us with the weight of chains which we had not felt as yet." Madame de Choiseul thus concludes this fine letter of July 17, 1766: "I have

always been suspicious of this Rousseau, with his singular systems, his extraordinary accoutrement, and his chair of eloquence resting on the roofs of houses. He has always seemed to me a charlatan of virtue."

The Duchess de Choiseul is a type as venerable as sympathetic. If one suffers at beholding a Madame de Boufflers, the *idol* of the Temple, doing the honors of Prince de Conti's house, conjointly with Mademoiselle Auguste, the danseuse of the Opera, or a Maréchale de Mirepoix sitting on the front seat of Madame de Pompadour's carriage, and afterwards on that of Madame Du Barry, one is happy at meeting a woman worthy of her rank and fortune, a woman who, everywhere and always, gives the example of what is good, beautiful, and true. There is such purity in her whole existence, such virtuous and simple grace in her pleasing person, such a great mind in her little body.[1] "The Duchess of Choiseul is not very pretty," writes Horace Walpole, "but has fine eyes, and is a little model in waxwork, which not being allowed to speak for some time as incapable, has a hesitation and modesty, the latter of which the Court has not cured, and the former of which is atoned for by the most interesting sound of voice, and forgotten in the most elegant turn and propriety of expression. Oh! it is the gentlest, amiable, civil little creature that ever came out of a fairy egg."

[1] See M. Grasset's fine study, *Madame de Choiseul et son temps.*

The salons of the Maréchale de Luxembourg and the Duchess de Choiseul are above all aristocratic circles. From the literary point of view, the three principal salons of Paris are those of Madame Geoffrin, the Marquise Du Deffand, and Mademoiselle de Lespinasse. The first is situated in the rue Saint-Honoré, the second in the rue Saint-Dominique, in a small house belonging to the Convent of Saint Joseph,[1] the third in the rue de Bellechasse.

Madame Geoffrin's power is a sign of the times. Does this very influential woman belong to the nobility? No. She is of very obscure birth. What is her husband? One of the founders of the manufactory of glass, a very rich but very ugly commoner, and so far as cleverness goes, a nullity. It is pretended that one of the lady's friends, returning to her one day after a rather long absence, said to her in speaking of her recollections: "But what has become of that old gentleman who always sat at the end of the table and never said anything to anybody?" — "Ah!" responded Madame Geoffrin, "I know whom you mean. . . . He is dead." — "Really! And who was he, then?" — "My husband." Is Madame Geoffrin literary? Not the least in the world. She is ignorance itself. She does not even know how to spell. Apropos of instruction she says: "I have got along so well without it that I have never felt the need of it." Very well! at the

[1] Now the Ministry of War.

close of Louis XV.'s reign this commoner, without youth,[1] beauty, talent, or education, this old woman who would have passed unnoticed at another epoch, is one of the principal authorities of France, one of the sovereigns of opinion. Her salon, celebrated throughout Europe, may be considered one of the institutions of the eighteenth century. The greatest nobles pay court to her. Even crowned heads render her a real homage. When, in June, 1766, she goes to visit her friend, I might almost say her protégé, Stanislas Poniatowski, King of Poland, her visit is considered by all the courts as a political event. The King receives her at Warsaw as a mother, with all imaginable respect, joy, and tenderness! At Vienna the Empress Maria Theresa overwhelms her with courteous attentions. A princess of the blood would not receive a more flattering welcome. The Czarina Catherine II. takes pleasure in writing affectionate letters to her, and values this correspondence most highly. Why was this prodigious success, this exceptional importance, accorded by France and foreign countries to a woman who must herself have been astonished at playing such a part? Why? Because Madame Geoffrin has had the talent to create by herself a literary salon, because artists and authors have dined and supped with her, because she is one of the stockholders of the Encyclopedia, because she has probably contributed more than any

[1] She was born in 1699.

other person to the establishment of a real sympathy between the two aristocracies of birth and talent. Such a vogue as hers is always susceptible of some explanation. Madame Geoffrin understands better than any one else how to manage the difficult, vain, irritable race of artists and men of letters; she has, if not wit, at least a great deal of tact, finesse, cleverness, blended with good-nature.[1] "Madame Geoffrin's manners," says Baron de Gleichen, "may be compared to La Fontaine's style. There is a good deal of art in them, but this art is not apparent. Everything in her seems very ordinary, and yet no one could equal her by trying to imitate her. Everything in her house is well arranged, easy, commodious, useful, and simple. Her bourgeois tone and common language impart a certain piquancy to a discourse full of wisdom and good sense." Horace Walpole is also an admirer of this woman who excels in the art of holding a salon. He writes to Lady Hervey, October 13, 1765: "Madame Geoffrin is a marvel of good sense, good information, good advice, and timeliness. She has a way of finding fault with you which charms me. Never in my life have I seen a person who can so quickly seize the defects, vanities, and deceits of any one, who explains them to one with such precision, nor who had the art of convincing one so easily. I have never liked being

[1] See the excellent introduction by M. Charles de Morey prefaced to the *Correspondance du roi Stanislas, Auguste Poniatowski et de Madame Geoffrin*, a very interesting volume, published by Plon.

corrected to my face. Well! you cannot imagine what pleasure I find in it with her; I take her both as confessor and director, and begin to believe that in the end I shall become a reasonable creature, which I have never had any pretension of being. The next time I see her I think I shall say: O common sense, seat yourself there! . . . If she could give herself the trouble, I assure you, Madame, she would govern me like a child."

The rival salon to that of Madame Geoffrin is that of the Marquise Du Deffand. Madame Du Deffand is as much a great lady as Madame Geoffrin is a commoner. Madame Du Deffand is as learned as Madame Geoffrin is ignorant. While one does not know how to spell, the other writes as well as the most illustrious authors. Both are old at the time when their salons exercise a preponderating influence at Paris. They are of nearly the same age. Madame Geoffrin was born in 1699, Madame Du Deffand in 1697, a year later than Madame de Sévigné, whose tradition she was to continue and to repeat her glory. The Marquise Du Deffand is not merely old; she is blind. Her eyes, once so beautiful, which had made, people say, so many ravages, are extinct. But, lacking the eyes of the body, she has those of the spirit, and with those she sees everything. Sitting, day and night, in that famous armchair which she calls her tub, the witty blind woman is a power which must be reckoned with. Her salon is an areopagus whose decrees are to be dreaded. To be

admitted there is a great distinction, a high favor. To cross its threshold one must be a somebody, either in the book of heraldry or the golden book of literature.[1] A procession of influential people, celebrated persons, well-informed newsmongers, defiles there at all hours. It is a centre of information which has the word of every enigma, the clue to every intrigue, the earliest hint of all ideas. It is a salon at once diplomatic and literary, political and diplomatic; it is the almost official rendezvous of foreign diplomatists, who come hither to find the daily materials for their correspondence with their governments. It is there that all pressing questions in France and elsewhere in Europe are treated in a remarkable manner by well-bred men who chat, who do not argue, and who, seeking above all things to be agreeable, know how, according to Boileau's precept,—

"To pass from grave to gay, from lively to severe."

The sarcastic dowager presides at all their interviews with a sort of magistery. The prestige of her reputation, the verve and eloquence of her speech, the superiority of her style and language, her rank, her relations, her marvellous wit, so keen, so subtle, so piercing, make her a woman whose domination is felt by the most recalcitrant. She has the talent of

[1] See the remarkable study by M. Lescure prefaced to the *Correspondance de la Marquise Du Deffand.* 2 vol. Plon.

making herself feared. Woe to him whose whims she takes it into her head to ridicule. She is, as she has been called, the female Voltaire, the high-priestess of irony. In her slim and nervous little hands the sceptre of wit is like a ferule. She is often amiable, but a trifle is enough to irritate, to embitter her, and then her redoubtable armchair is like a tribune whence she launches invectives, whence she discharges all the shafts of satire. Hers is the chief salon of Paris. Her letters are models of style, marvels of precision, lucidity, subtlety. No classic writer has a more irreproachable form. Madame de Sévigné has personified the seventeenth century. Madame Du Deffand is like the incarnation of the eighteenth. Voltaire himself, Voltaire, who considers her as the arbiter of renown, is so afraid of her that, in order to pay court to her, he tries to persuade her that he is blind like herself. There is one man, however, who dares to brave the vengeful thunderbolts of the Marquise Du Deffand, and who must have many reasons to fear her, for he is a savant, an academician, a man of the world, and a philosopher: D'Alembert. But that can be explained: D'Alembert is in love with the enemy of the Marquise, — Mademoiselle de Lespinasse.

The two rivals had begun by being friends. They lived under the same roof for ten years, from 1754 to 1764. The illegitimate child of the Countess d'Albon, Mademoiselle de Lespinasse, born in 1732, had many trials to undergo. Poor, without any

support, she had at first been happy to accept a shelter with Madame Du Deffand. Pleasing, though not pretty, intelligent, instructed, talking and writing well, concealing a restless mind and an ardent imagination under an apparent calmness and reserve, her inferior position, her species of social and literary servitude, caused her at last keen suffering. The companion made her *coup d'État.* She slyly installed in her little room a sort of intimate circle reserved to certain initiates coming to spend a few moments there in secret before the hour when the salon of the Marquise opened. But some backbiter betrayed the secret. The blind old woman learned of the conspiracy. Exasperated by such an act of rebellion, she pitilessly banished Mademoiselle de Lespinasse. The quarrel between these two women has divided Parisian society into two camps, one defending the Marquise, the other pitying her companion. Mademoiselle de Lespinasse has not remained without resources. Her faithful adherents — D'Alembert, Turgot, the Chevalier de Chastellux, the Abbé de Boismont, the Archbishop of Aix — have clubbed together to assure her a modest but independent position, and have hired an apartment for her in the rue de Bellechasse. Her salon is not large, but it is animated by a flame of intelligence, sympathy, and passion. The restricted and chosen circle which frequent it find more charm there than in the great intellectual gatherings of a Marquise Du Deffand or a Madame Geoffrin.

These celebrated salons which are the admiration of all Europe are very attractive, very agreeable on the surface. But what contradictions, what pettinesses, there are in this society of those privileged by birth, wit, or fortune! What hours of discouragement, ennui, and chagrin are the lot of all these people who are amusing themselves, or, better, who have the hope, the pretension, of doing so! Madame Geoffrin herself, in spite of her good health, her good sense, and good humor, contemplates at times with inquietude, with alarm, the work of these Encyclopedists to whom she renders continual services. She receives and protects them, she gives large sums to these artisans of disorder, these demolishers of the throne and the altar, and yet, by one of those inconsistencies so frequent in the eighteenth century, she is at bottom a royalist and a devotee. The friend, confidant, and counsellor of the most incredulous philosophers, the most dangerous materialists, the woman whose largesses contribute greatly to the publication of the Encyclopedia, goes to confession to a Capuchin, is assiduous at Mass and Vespers, always in her seat at the church of Saint Roch, and careful to have a priest brought to the death-beds of her friends. At times a secret instinct warns this aged woman, who likes repose and discriminating conservations, that her house, apparently so reserved and tranquil, is the accursed laboratory where the poisons which will inflict death on individuals and society are

being silently prepared under the light of a salon lamp, by a restricted and chosen circle.

Madame Du Deffand herself has at times ephemeral inclinations toward religion and piety. It happens to her at certain hours to aspire vaguely to the devout estate, "the state," she says, "which seems to her the happiest in life." She bitterly regrets that peace of heart given by the faith, and which is such a force, such a consolation, in our valley of tears. In spite of all her wit, she succumbs under the burden of an incurable ennui, and her letters breathe sometimes the accents of despair. In this worldly society, the sublimity of frivolity, she expresses here and there, with sinister eloquence, thoughts which make one shudder. Then her reflections, profound and full of anguish, are as striking as the soliloquy of Hamlet. Her armchair, which she calls her tub, she might also call her tomb. In it she is like a dead woman who might have the sentiment of life. To the man who said: "Go lightly, mortals, don't bear on too hard," to the superficial Voltaire, this poor old woman, blind both morally and physically, addresses with doleful anxiety questions concerning the terrible problems of human destiny. She writes to him, April 1, 1769: "Tell me why, detesting life, I dread death. Nothing indicates to me that all will not be at an end with me; on the contrary, I perceive the dilapidation of my mind as well as that of my body. All that is said for or against makes no impression on me. I listen only to myself, and I find nothing but doubt and obscurity.

Believe; says one, *it is the safest.* But how can one believe what one does not comprehend? What one does not comprehend may doubtless exist; therefore I do not deny it; I am like one born deaf and blind. He admits that there are sounds and colors; but does he know what he is admitting? If it were enough not to deny, it would be all very well; but that is not enough. How can one decide between a beginning and an eternity, between the full and the empty? Not one of my senses can teach me; what can one learn without them? Meanwhile, if I do not believe what ought to be believed, I am threatened with being a thousand times more unhappy after my death than I am during my life. On what shall one decide, and is it possible to decide? I ask you, who have a character so true, that you ought, by sympathy, to discover the truth, if it be discoverable. I must have tidings of the other world and be told whether we are destined to play a part there."

To crown her misfortunes, Madame Du Deffand is at the same time a victim to the tortures of both mind and heart. She who had never known real love, falls into a sort of ecstatic passion when she is nearly seventy. She conceives for a man twenty years younger than herself, and who fears ridicule above all things, the caustic and witty Englishman, Horace Walpole, a strange, vague, yet violent and exclusive affection which is not friendship, which cannot be love. As if by the irony of fate, she loves for the first time at

an age when it is no longer permissible to love for the last one.

Mademoiselle de Lespinasse is possibly still more unhappy than Madame Du Deffand. This demoiselle, apparently frivolous, loves like Sappho, like the Portuguese nun, like the new Heloise. She is a type of hot-headed, feverish, frenetic love. She loves to madness, to frenzy, a brilliant officer who cares nothing for her, — M. de Guibert. She lives by this love and she dies of it. Her poor body and her poor soul are as if enveloped in a shirt of Nessus. One might call her a victim of the ancient fatality. In her despair, in her agony, she writes to her insensible lover: "Ah! how cruel men are! Tigers are kind in comparison to them. I ought naturally to have devoted myself to hating; I have fulfilled my destiny badly. I have loved much and hated little. . . . I have no longer the strength to love; my soul fatigues, torments me; I am no longer constant to anything. . . . I have a fever every day, and my doctor, who is not the most skilful of men, tells me constantly that I am consumed with chagrin, that my pulse and my respiration announce an active suffering, and he always goes away saying, 'We have no remedy for the soul.'" And you, O philosophers, do you think you have any? Men of the Encyclopedia, habitués of the celebrated salons, if you want to know what philosophy is, and what religion, compare the death of one of your adepts with the death of a Christian woman!

X

THE PHILOSOPHERS

WHERE is the time when La Bruyère wrote: "A man born Christian and French finds himself constrained in satire. The great subjects are forbidden him." Where is the time when the advocate Barbier put this sentence in his journal: "I think one ought to employ himself honorably, without meddling in State affairs over which he has neither power nor authority." Prudence, reserve, respect for authority, fear of weakening the foundations of the social edifice, — the philosophers have changed all that. The salons have become academies in which people incessantly talk of religion and politics, for the sake of attacking the Church and even royalty. In 1762 Bachaumont calls attention to a deluge of pamphlets, brochures, and political dissertations, "a rage to argue on matters of finance and government." Horace Walpole affirms in 1765, that "the atheists who engross conversation inveigh as loudly against kings as against priests. . . . They do nothing but preach, and their avowed doctrine is atheism. . . . Even Voltaire does not satisfy them.

One of their devotees said of him: 'He is bigoted, he is a deist.'"

The philosophers are the heroes of the day. Their doctrines have not as yet penetrated the masses of the people. But in the aristocracy, the wealthy commoners, the world of letters, the superior magistracy, the world of finance, they take the arrogant tone of masters. One meets them in all the academies, the houses of all the great nobles, at every fête, every elegant supper. Certain prelates of the upper clergy even are accused of fraternizing with them. Now that the fops are out of fashion, the men in vogue are the philosophers. A philosopher with all his subversive ideas appears as indispensable to a well-kept salon as a chandelier with all its candles. Philosophy, before becoming the supreme danger, is a pastime, a diversion, an elegancy. The fire which is to burn the edifice shows itself at first under the aspect of an evening illumination, an amusing Bengal light. The great nobles play with loaded guns without suspecting that they are about to go off. They are like workmen who, undertaking works of demolition, should delude themselves and naïvely imagine that they are building. Strange types, these revolutionists in lace jabots, with their fashionable blasphemies, their cups of gold or crystal full of an intoxicating but poisonous beverage, these effeminate philosophers who, with such a charming smile and eyes so soft, utter in refined and pleasing tones the most impious remarks in the very manner in which one would

recite an idyl or a madrigal! Curious repasts, these suppers, where "one is at table amidst a delicate luxury, among smiling and well-dressed women, with learned and agreeable men, in a society where intelligence is prompt and intercourse safe. After the second course there is an explosion of animation, sallies flash out, wits flame or sparkle. At dessert could one avoid making witticisms on the gravest subjects? With coffee arises the question of the immortality of the soul and the existence of God."[1] Scepticism is regarded as a thing pertaining to good society. People make a pleasure, a glory of it. The old-time aristocratic stiffness changes into persiflage or irony concerning sacred things. The revolution still wears ruffles. Before putting on the carmagnole it drapes itself in silk and velvet. It will end with red caps; it begins with red-heeled slippers.

In all this there are many oddities, many inconsistencies. Let Walpole describe it for us. "By what I said of their religious or rather irreligious opinions, you must not conclude their people of quality atheists, — at least, not the men. Happily for them, poor souls! they are not capable of going so far into thinking. They assent to a great deal, because it is the fashion, and because they don't know how to contradict. They are ashamed to defend the Roman Catholic religion, because it is

[1] M. Taine, *Origines de la France contemporaine.*

quite exploded; but I am convinced they believe it in their hearts." [1]

The philosophers themselves recoil before the consequences and the application of their doctrines. Diderot, in his *Projet d'instruction publique pour la Russie*, recognizes that "atheism, adapted to a small number of thinkers, cannot be suitable for a society." He, the pretended destroyer of religions and tyrannies, he who, in an access of savage fury, wrote this outrageous distich, —

> "*Et ma main ourdirait les entrailles du prêtre,*
> *A défaut de cordon pour étrangler les rois,*"— [2]

he professes a naïve adoration for the Empress Catherine II., goes to Russia to pay her homage, and receives from her northern majesty a heap of compliments and presents. Voltaire exclaims in a candid moment: "The wretch," — it is the patriarch of Ferney's appellation for the Catholic religion, — "the wretch is good for the rabble great and small."

I read in Bachaumont, under date of April 23, 1769: "It is known from various letters which M. Voltaire has written in this region, that this great poet has renewed this year the edifying spectacle of the last one, and has again received his Easter Communion with much devotion, but in a less public manner; he has alleged certain incon-

[1] January 25, 1766.

[2] And my hand would twist the entrails of the priest,
Lacking another cord to strangle kings.

veniences which oblige him to keep his bed, and receive Communion in his own house.

"It is claimed that M. Voltaire, piqued by the complaints of the Bishop of Belley, lamenting over his incredulity and his continued obstinacy in spreading libels against religion, determined to verify this Catholic action, and that he had recourse to notaries to receive at this moment his profession of faith, which he has sent to Monseigneur. However it may be with regard to this circumstance, about which people differ, it is evident in several letters to his friends how much he is attached to religion, what respect he has for it, and with what humility he has hastened to satisfy the obligations of Catholicity."

Is Bachaumont altogether serious when he thus expresses himself? I could not answer for it. It is certain, at all events, that Voltaire built a Catholic church at his own expense, close beside his château, and that on the portal of it he had sculptured this inscription, more haughty than evangelic: *Deo erexit Voltaire.*

Such contradictions exasperate Horace Walpole's common sense. "Atheism," he writes, "is a pitiable mess, although all the cooks of France exert themselves to invent new sauces for it. As to the soul, perhaps they have none on the continent, but I think we have such things in England. I think that Shakespeare, for example, had several for his part. As to what concerns the Jews, although they

don't eat pork, I like them, because they are better Christians than Voltaire."[1] Walpole, the phlegmatic Englishman, so moderate, courteous, liberal, so accustomed to the civil manners of his country, Walpole, the friend of the Marquise Du Deffand, the wit, the man of fashion, the frequenter of salons, could not accustom himself to the philosophers of France. He found them ill-bred, pretentious, tiresome. He accuses them of "having taken up gravity, thinking it was philosophy and English, and so have acquired nothing in the room of their natural levity and cheerfulness. . . . They are contemptuous and reserved, instead of being ridiculously, consequently pardonably, impertinent."[2] What has become of the old French gaiety? For the nation it is no longer anything but a souvenir of its youth. "Laughing is as much out of fashion as pantins or bilboquets. Good folks, they have no time to laugh. There is God and the King to be pulled down first; and men and women, one and all, are devoutly employed in the demolition. They think me profane for having any belief left. But this is not my only crime: I have told them, and am undone by it, that they have taken from us to admire the two dullest things we had, Whist and Richardson.[3] . . . There was no soul in Paris but philosophers, whom I wished in

[1] Letter of March 17, 1771. [2] Letter of January 25, 1766.
[3] Letter of October 19, 1765.

heaven, though they do not wish themselves so. They are so overbearing and underbred. . . . I sometimes go to Baron d'Olbach's; but I have left off his dinners, as there was no bearing the authors, and philosophers, and savants, of which he has a pigeon-house full. They soon turned my head with a new system of antediluvian deluges, which they have invented to prove the eternity of matter."[1]

All this philosophic and scientific flurry bewildered and bored the witty Englishman. These endless blasphemies made him love religion. "Don't be astonished," he writes, "if I become a thorough Jesuit." These gilded salons resplendent with lights, these perfumed boudoirs filled with flowers, where marchionesses and duchesses, powdered, glittering, covered with precious stones, and great nobles in velvet coats with iridescent reflections, give themselves up to senseless invectives against the Christ, make him wish to turn his back upon them all and betake himself to tranquil meditation in the depths of some cloister, far from the philosophers. "When I get too tired of their madness," he says again, "I retire to the Chartreuse,[2] where I am tempted to prefer Lesueur to all the painters I know." This Carthusian convent he always revisited with emotion on each of his journeys. In 1739 he had said: "One

[1] Letter of December 5, 1765.

[2] The Carthusian convent at Paris, rue d'Enfer. At that time Lesueur's Saint Bruno, now in the Louvre, might be seen there.

finds there every convenience which melancholy, meditation, or despair could desire. And yet, one is pleased there." But in 1771 the impression is not so vivid. He writes, July 9: "I have not half the pleasure in visiting the churches and convents that I formerly felt. The consciousness that the vision is dispelled, the lack of the fervor so necessary in all that is religious, gives these places the aspect of theatres doomed to destruction. The monks trot from one side to the other as if they had not much longer to stay there, and what once appeared to me a sacred twilight is now only dirt and shadows."

Who knows whether impious doctrines have not already crossed the thresholds of these pious asylums where souls once found emotions so pure and such sweet consolations? The stone saints of Gothic architecture no longer seem so venerable. The changing lights of stained windows have no more the same mysterious clearness. The sound of the organ is less grandiose, less touching. Walpole is afflicted by that spirit of the times, that accursed breath which corrupts and withers human souls. The same sentiment of vague disquiet, of melancholy discouragement, is found in many minds; above all, in many hearts. In the midst of this society, ailing in spite of its brilliancy, in spite of the paint and patches which cover the cheeks of its fashionable beauties, how many strive to stupefy themselves, like those timid people who sing when they are afraid! What do these success-

ful personages, men or women, say to themselves when, wrested from the worldly tumult, they enter into themselves a moment? What do they think at the hour when the festal lamps are extinct, the flowers faded, and when, after a night noisy with impieties and so-called pleasures, the clarity of dawn appears?

SECOND PART

THE WOMEN OF VERSAILLES AT THE END OF THE REIGN OF LOUIS XV.

[1768–1774]

I

LOUIS XV. IN 1768

MARIE LECZINSKA was just dead, and saddened Versailles presented a funeral aspect. Mademoiselle Genet, the future Madame Campan, who had recently become reader to Mesdames de France, was profoundly struck by the doleful spectacle offered by the château. "Those grand apartments hung with black," she wrote, "those State armchairs raised upon several steps and overhung by a canopy adorned with plumes, those caparisoned horses, that immense procession in deep mourning, those enormous shoulder-knots embroidered with gold and silver spangles which decorated the habits of the pages and even those of the footmen, all that pageantry, in fine, produced such an effect on my senses that I could hardly hold myself up straight when I was brought into the apartment of the Princesses. The first day on which I read in Madame Victoire's private room, it was impossible for me to pronounce more than two sentences; my heart palpitated, my voice trembled, my sight was dim."

Within two years and a half, Louis XV. had lost

his son, his daughter-in-law, and his wife. These three saintly and affecting deaths were for a moment to reawaken sentiments of religion and repentance in his heart. During the long sufferings of Marie Leczinska he had surrounded her with such assiduous attentions that the poor Queen, little accustomed to such solicitude, knew not how to show him her gratitude. After she had breathed her last, it was with sincere emotion and respectful tenderness that her husband imprinted a last kiss on her icy forehead. People fancied that so many warnings could not be in vain. Louis XV. was fifty-eight years old. His surgeon had recommended virtue to him as being good for the body as well as the soul, and advised him to not merely rein up his horses, but to take them out of the traces. Excusable to a certain degree in a young man, vice is ignoble, ridiculous, revolting, in an old one. Everything combined to induce the King to amend; health, honor, self-interest, conscience, the clamor of public opinion, the voice of morality and religion, the dignity of his throne, and the salvation of his soul. During the last four years, since the death of Madame de Pompadour that is, he had had no acknowledged mistress. The Deer Park was not closed; but the mean debaucheries of that mysterious rendezvous gave less occasion for scandal to the court and the people than would a reigning favorite in the palace of Versailles. Louis XV. showed affection for his four remaining daughters, Mesdames Adelaide, Victoire, Sophie, and

Louise, and it was hoped they would bring their father back to truly religious ideas. The Most Christian King had faith, and it might be believed that, age having blunted his passions, he would at last repair the evils wrought by his bad example, by a pious and respectable life. He may himself have desired a reconciliation with God, but the force of habit, the interested suggestions of persons speculating in vice, a sort of impulse and giddiness, were still to prevail over reason and remorse.

The dominant sentiment in the heart of the aging Louis XV. was not the religious one, but a mixture of apathy and indifference. Men who have reigned for a long time, whether they end their days on the throne, abdicate, or die in exile, are nearly always attacked, at the close of their career, by a sort of lassitude and disgust. They have seen so many intrigues, meannesses, and recantations; they have been the the object of such stupid adulations and loathsome flatteries; they know the ugliness of men's souls so thoroughly, that they end by conceiving an absolute contempt for human nature. This contempt does not go so far as wrath and indignation; it is tranquil, indolent, disdainful. An experienced sovereign retains no illusions concerning others or himself. Whatever may be proposed to him, he feels inclined to answer: What is the good of it?

His ministers, his courtiers, his mistresses, his people, inspire him with equal mistrust. There are

hours when he would like to abandon the governmental machine to itself, so much is he afflicted by the past and discouraged by the present. Like an old pilot contemplating from some rocky height the barks threatened by the tempest, which he can no longer aid, the monarch, from the interior of his palace, sees the ship foundering in the distance, and sadly tells himself that he is powerless to save the crew.

Disturbed by gloomy presentiments, Louis XV. believed no longer either in the prestige of his throne or the future of his family. He had recourse to petty means, shabby tricks, conspiracies against himself, in the hope of strengthening his tottering power. As Madame Campan has so well remarked, "to separate Louis de Bourbon from the King of France was what the monarch found the most piquant thing in his royal existence." "They wanted it so, they thought it would be for the best." That was the way he talked when the operations of his ministers had been unsuccessful. One might say he had a dual reign, with two policies and two diplomacies, a private treasury and an occult government in opposition to the official one.

As M. Boutaric says, "the *man* spent a part of his life in thwarting and contradicting the *king*. Curious spectacle, that of an absolute monarch reduced to the most obscure intrigues in order to obtain his will, which he is afraid to declare, engaging in an underhand and secret struggle with his ministers,

and at last deceived in his expectations, wounded in his self-love, a retired conspirator, persisting to his last breath in intrigues transparent on every side, and owing it solely to his supreme rank that he does not share the captivity or exile of his agents, I was about to say his accomplices." It was in this way that he admitted to his secret diplomacy such persons as the Chevalier d'Eon, by turns man and woman, and the famous Count de Saint-Germain, who, claiming to be several centuries old, was supposed to possess a prodigious elixir of long life. Baron de Gleichen relates in his *Souvenirs* that this "led to the composition of the laughable story of the old chambermaid of a lady who had hidden away a phial of this divine liquor; the ancient soubrette discovered it and drank so much of it that by dint of drinking and rejuvenating, she became a little baby."

There were adventurers in the personnel of the secret diplomacy, but there were remarkable men likewise. Count de Broglie was the chief of these. The mysterious Minister of Foreign Affairs acted simultaneously with the official one. "He presently had trusty agents at every court; sometimes it was the resident minister himself, unknown to the titular Minister of Foreign Affairs; more frequently it was some inferior employee of legation, who thus became a spy on his immediate chief. M. d'Ogny, director of the secret postal service, recognized the despatches of the initiated diplomatists by an exte-

rior sign; they were sent to Count de Broglie through Guinard, a servant of the château, deciphered in the cabinet of the Count, and then sent back to Louis XV. with draughts of replies, to which the King each time affixed his visa after making corrections. Baron de Breteuil, ambassador to Sweden in 1766, who had been recommended by the King to pay particular attention to the affairs of that country, Count Desalleurs, ambassador to Constantinople, M. de Saint-Priest, and lastly, M. de Vergennes, took part in this secret diplomacy.[1] "Count de Broglie retained the direction of it even after he had been exiled in consequence of an official disgrace which was only apparently such." As M. Geffroy remarks: "Louis XV., aided by this unknown personnel, liked to direct the principal affairs himself with a certain attention. Perhaps, jealous of all who surrounded him,— ministers, favorites, and mistresses,— he took pleasure in being able to thwart and oppose them secretly, in conspiring against them without taking the trouble to make an open resistance. His hidden policy was frequently more honorable than the avowed policy of the cabinet of Versailles." M. Théodore Lavallée has made the same reflection. He says: "The secret correspondence of Louis XV. shows that this prince had the sentiment of national grandeur as if by royal instinct and family tradition; it is full of good sense, dignity, and loyalty. No

[1] *Gustave III. et la Cour de France*, par M. A. Geffroy.

one can read it without regretting that this noble policy should have been rendered sterile by lack of will, that these profound views concerning the interests of France's future should have been lost sight of in the debaucheries of the Deer Park."

What was lacking to Louis XV. was not intelligence — he had a great deal of it; nor was it the moral sense, for even while doing evil he had a clear idea of what was right; it was will. From his youth he had had upright and pure intentions, and from time to time he had them still, but he did not feel in himself the needful energy to withstand the torrent of his time. As was said by his huntsman, Le Roy, that master of the hounds whom Sainte-Beuve styles a La Bruyère on horseback, "he despaired of ever being able to do what is right, because one is always more disposed to regard as impossible in itself what one has not the courage to do. To this point had a man arrived by degrees whose intelligence and character, if he had been born a private person, would have made him considered above the common and what is properly called a gallant man." In growing old he had preserved a noble and elegant figure, regular features, a reserved but subtle and witty style of conversation, an exquisite politeness, and a very great care of his person. "This prince was still beloved; one would have desired that a manner of life suitable to his age and dignity should at last throw a veil over the aberrations of the past and justify the love which the French people had had for his youth.

It pained them to condemn him severely. If he had established recognized mistresses at court, the excessive devotion of the Queen was blamed for it. Mesdames were reproached for not trying to avert the danger of seeing the King arrange another intimacy for himself with some new favorite. People regretted Madame Henriette, twin-sister of the Duchess of Parma; this princess had had some influence over the King's mind; they wrote that if she had lived she would have exerted herself to provide amusements for him in the bosom of his own family; that she would have accompanied the King on his journeys, and would have done the honors of those little suppers which he was fond of giving in his private apartments." [1]

Count de Ségur, a wit and boon companion *par excellence*, who saw the last years of Louis XV., likewise speaks of them with a certain sympathy. "This good, feeble monarch," he says in his charming Memoirs, "was in his youth the object of a too little deserved enthusiasm; the rigorous reproaches cast upon his old age are not less exaggerated. Successor to the absolute power of Louis XIV., he reigned sixty years without its being possible to accuse him of an act of cruelty. . . . No prince can be found who has not more or less participated in the errors, weaknesses, and follies of his time. Moreover, the French have always shown themselves too

[1] Memoirs of Madame Campan.

lenient to this sort of wrong-doings; but they desire at least that these stains should disappear under the rays of some halo of glory. Hence they become only too indulgent and almost panegyrize the same faults when committed by the chivalrous Francis I., the brave Henry, the majestic Louis XIV., while they bitterly reproach the weak Louis XV. on account of them."

Sovereigns are nearly always the personification of their epoch. They seem to give the law, but generally they merely submit to it. The contrasts in the character of Louis XV. reappear in the society of which he was the head. He belongs to that period of dissolution and decay when, according to Chateaubriand's expression, "statesmen became men of letters, and men of letters statesmen; great nobles bankers, farmers-general great nobles. The fashions were as ridiculous as the arts were in bad taste; they painted shepherdesses in paniers in salons where colonels were embroidering. Everything was out of order in both minds and morals, sure sign of a revolution. . . . To see the monarch benumbed in voluptuousness, the courtiers corrupted, the ministers malicious or imbecile, some of the philosophers undermining religion, and others the State; the nobles either ignorant or attacked by the vices of the day; the ecclesiastics, at Paris, the disgrace of their order; the provinces full of prejudices, — one would have thought of a crowd of workmen hastening to tear down a great edifice."

And yet, in appearance, there was very little alteration. As Count de Ségur remarks, "the old social edifice was completely ruined in its lowest foundations, without any sign at the surface which announced its approaching fall. The change in manners was unperceived because it had been gradual; the etiquette at court was the same, — the same throne, the same names, distinctions of rank and formalities were still held there. The parliaments, opposing the government, but in a respectful manner, had become almost republican without suspecting it, and were themselves striking the hour of revolutions while supposing they were merely following the examples of their predecessors when they resisted the concordat of Francis I. and the fiscal despotism of Mazarin." Louis XV., who was a shrewd observer, in spite of his defects, appreciated the whole gravity of the situation. But to remedy it would have demanded genius, — not merely cleverness, talent, or wisdom. To conciliate, at the close of the eighteenth century, necessary liberties with indispensable authority, was a problem which the greatest of men might have found no means of solving. Louis XV. contented himself with saying: "Things will last as they are as long as I do."

At his side a minister was governing whose character was in singular contrast with that of his master. The Duke de Choiseul was as enthusiastic, loquacious, good-humored, as Louis XV. was reserved, taciturn, and bored. The monarch, although he

understood his religion badly, had a deep and lively faith, while the minister was Voltairean. Liked by the parliaments, the aristocracy, and the men of letters, Choiseul, with his audacious petulance, his brilliant and easy way of transacting business, his seductive and resourceful talent, his witty even eloquent conversation, his faith in his star, his habit of believing all successes possible, his philosophy which stopped at Voltaire and disdained Rousseau, his unconscious prodigality, which, counting on the future suppression of monasteries and the taxation of ecclesiastical property to supply the deficit, was untroubled by the pit dug beneath the throne, Choiseul was the type of that brave and charming, frivolous and adventurous nobility which marches smilingly toward an abyss covered with flowers. "Never," says Baron de Gleichen in his *Souvenirs*, "have I known a man so capable as he of spreading joy and contentment all around his person. When he entered a room, he rummaged his pockets and seemed to draw from them an inexhaustible abundance of pleasantries and gaiety."

In spite of his charm and kindliness, the minister, whom Pope Benedict XIV. described as "a fool who had a good deal of genius," had drawn upon himself irreconcilable enmities. His rivals and those who were jealous of him could not forgive him for his lofty fortune, and anxiously sought means of overthrowing this colossus who dominated everything. In what salon, by what means, could they

hope to prepare and bring about the fall of the man who hampered them, — such was the question they incessantly asked themselves. As has been remarked by Madame Campan, Louis XV. had at this time no relations with women except those of a class that could be of no use in a prolonged intrigue; the Deer Park, moreover, was a seraglio in which the beauties were constantly renewed. They would have liked to give the monarch a mistress who, by means of daily insinuations, might have force enough to overthrow the powerful minister. To fight a grand vizier, a sultana was essential. This was why the enemies of the Duke de Choiseul cast their eyes upon the woman whose beginnings we are about to recall, — the Countess Du Barry.

II

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE COUNTESS DU BARRY

ON the 9th of January, 1829, a curious suit was tried before the civil tribunal of first instance. It was a contest between two families, each of which claimed to be the sole heir of the Countess Du Barry, and demanded the carrying into execution of a legacy bequeathed to the Countess by the Duke de Cossé-Brissac, massacred by the revolutionists in 1792. The Duke, while naming his daughter, Madame de Mortemart, as universal legatee, had burdened her succession by a legacy which, at first, could not be paid. But under the Restoration the Mortemart family, having received a considerable portion of the indemnity of a milliard, granted to the *Émigrés*, found itself in a position to accomplish the last wishes of the Duke de Brissac. The Gomard heirs presented themselves, appealing, as the certificate of Madame Du Barry's birth to the following extract, drawn, they said, from the baptismal registers of the parish of Vaucouleurs, diocese of Toul: "Jeanne, daughter of Jean-Jacquard Gomard de Vaubernier and Anne Bécu, called Quantigny, was born August

19, 1746, and was baptized the same day, had Joseph de Mange for godfather and Jeanne de Birabin for godmother, who have signed with me: L. Galon, vicar of Vaucouleurs, Joseph de Mange and Jeanne de Birabin."

The heirs on the maternal side, the Bécus, also presented themselves. They came not merely to share, but to contest with the Gomards all rights of succession to Madame Du Barry. They maintained that the certificate of birth furnished by the latter was false, having been fabricated in 1768 to flatter the Countess, and they opposed to it another act, taken from the civil registers of the town of Vaucouleurs, September 25, 1827, and which was expressed in these terms: "Jeanne, natural daughter of Anne Bécu, called Quantigny, was born August 19, 1743, and baptized the same day. For godfather she had Joseph Demange, and for godmother Jeanne Birabin."

By judgment of January 9, 1829, — a judgment confirmed by a decree of the royal court of Paris, February 22, 1830, — the Seine tribunal of first instance decided in favor of the Bécu heirs. The certificate of birth produced by the Gomards was declared apocryphal. The tribunals thus established that in 1768 a genealogy of complaisance had been invented in favor of the mistress of Louis XV. Of a natural daughter they had made a legitimate daughter. The Bécu girl had been transformed into a Demoiselle Gomard de Vaubernier. The "par-

ticle" was attributed to the godfather, M. Demange, and to the godmother, Jeanne Birabin, "la Birabine," as they said in the country, who became Madame de Birabin. The fawning spirit went to even further lengths. The favorite was made younger and made to come into the world, not on August 19, 1743, the real day of her birth, but three years later, August 19, 1746. In his interesting work, *Les Curiosites historiques*, M. Le Roi, the learned curator of the Versailles library, has told the truth about the origin of the Countess Du Barry. He has given her back her true name: Jeanne Bécu. He has refuted the numberless falsehoods which tended to create an absolutely false legend on the subject of the royal mistress.

The child who was one day to call herself the Countess Du Barry had for mother a simple peasant. She had to struggle against poverty from her cradle. A commissary of provisions, M. Dumonceau, gave her the first elements of instruction through charity. He placed her in the convent of Saint Anne, with two pairs of sheets and six napkins by way of trousseau. It is said that she afterwards peddled haberdashery through the streets, and later on, under the name of Mademoiselle Rançon, the name of the husband recently taken by her mother, entered the millinery shop of one M. Mabille, rue Saint Honoré. It seems the little shop girl was not a model of virtue. Alas! the snares of every kind with which pretty girls are surrounded make goodness and beauty what may

almost be called incompatible things in the poorer classes. The milliner encountered one of those men who are met in every capital, — Count Jean Du Barry. He said to himself that so charming a person ought to make her way, and in his enthusiasm he gave her a seraphic title: he called her Mademoiselle l'Ange. This angel, of an inferior order, presided at the gambling-parties given by the Count. It was there Dumouriez saw her in 1764. In 1764 the Duke de Lauzun followed her from the opera ball, and found her truly ravishing. Lebel, valet-de-chambre to Louis XV., who, in consequence of his special functions was on the track of all dainties for the King, thought he would do well to place Mademoiselle l'Ange on the list of his clients. He fancied she would be only the favorite of a day and night and would then disappear, after having had her place in the Deer Park but an instant. He was mistaken. The former milliner was destined to a succession that had been vacant four years, — that of the Marquise de Pompadour.

Instead of imitating the great ladies who fatigued the King, she showed herself just as she was, under the aspect of a veritable courtesan, with all the cynicism, animation, and refinements of her trade. Louis XV. found his jaded senses revive as if by miracle. He was delighted by it. The new favorite seemed to him an exceptional being. He determined to cover her with a rain of gold and jewels, and make her the first *femme entretenue* in France, in all Europe.

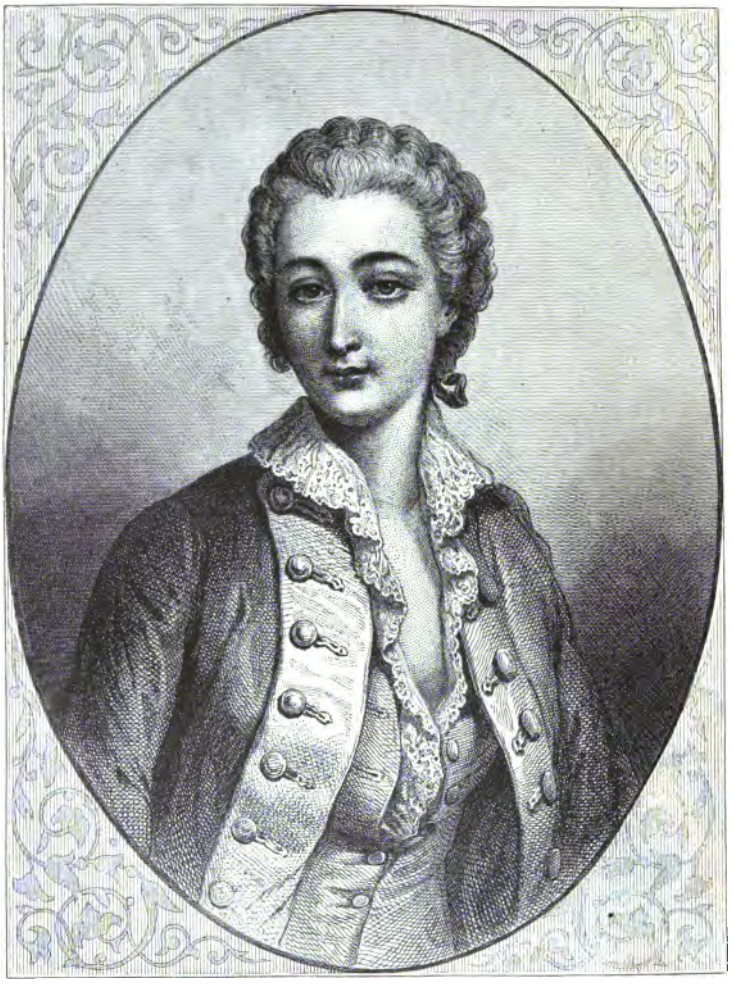
Thinking that a demoiselle could not decently fulfil the functions of royal mistress, he decided that he would at once make the new favorite a married woman and a woman of title. Nothing easier than to find her a nominal husband who, having received a goodly sum, would quietly retire behind the scenes and not appear again on the stage. Count Jean Du Barry could not play this lucrative part himself, seeing that he was already married. But he had a bachelor brother who seemed made expressly for the circumstance. This complaisant brother was called Count William Du Barry. He was a poor officer of marines, who lived at Toulouse, with his mother. To summon him to Paris, to marry him to the mistress of Louis XV., to give him a large sum and send him back at once to Toulouse, was but the affair of a few days. Queen Marie Leczinska had died June 24, 1768. Her husband did not lament her long, for he was smitten the next month with this so-called Jeanne Gomard de Vaubernier, this Jeanne Bécu, called l'Ange, who was about to become Madame the Countess Du Barry. The contract was signed, July 23, in presence of the notaries Du Châtelet of Paris, and this comedy marriage was celebrated, September 1, at the church of Saint Laurent, Auteuil. The nuptial benediction once given, the husband departed for Toulouse, and the wife went to take up her quarters at Versailles.

Louis XV. congratulated himself on his choice. Madame Du Barry was neither learned nor witty;

she had no relatives well placed at court, and to the monarch these seemed very great advantages. He did not want either a great lady, like the Duchess de Châteauroux, who would have arrived with a cortege of relations and favorites, nor a female politician, like Madame de Pompadour, who would constantly busy herself with parliaments and the clergy. What he desired was not a female adviser, but an amusement.

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
R L



MADAME DU BARRY.

III

THE TRIUMPHS OF THE COUNTESS DU BARRY

WHAT would the Countess Du Barry become? Would she be an ephemeral mistress, like the women of the Deer Park, or would she have the official position of favorite? This was what everybody was asking. The important thing to know was whether or not she would be presented. Bets were openly made on this question at Versailles. The Duke de Choiseul, hostile to the new countess, was against the presentation. But the King desired it. His will finally prevailed. He had known Madame Du Barry since July, 1768, but she was not presented until April 22, 1769. The ceremony took place with the ordinary formalities. After having received the command of the King, who had already been told the names of the sponsor, a lady making the presentation, and of her two assistants, who must always be women of the court, they arrived at the door of the grand cabinet in full toilette; that is, in robes stretched over hoops measuring three and a half ells in circumference, a long mantle clasped at the waist, a suitable bodice, flowing lappets, and as many dia-

monds as they had been able to procure. Madame Du Barry's sponsor was the Countess de Béarn. Louis XV. looked radiant. He enjoyed the triumph of the woman he had chosen.

Thenceforward he was settled. Madame Du Barry was sufficient for her royal lover, who was tired of going clandestinely to the Deer Park, where he was obliged to hide himself, and was consequently not at ease. He closed that mysterious establishment and lodged his new mistress in the château of Versailles, in an apartment on the second story, just over that which he occupied himself. He could go to her at any hour, and unobserved, by a staircase leading to the Deer Court. A door opening on a small landing gave admission to one of the two cabinets situated near the alcove of the favorite's chamber. Her apartment formed a suite of boudoirs each more elegant than another. It was the last word of luxury. The bedroom clock represented the three Graces supporting a vase in which was a revolving dial, while above it Love indicated the hours with his arrow. The most exquisite objects of art, marvels of upholstery, bronzes, marble, lacquer work, china, statuettes, abounded in this asylum of voluptuous pleasure.

"It is the senseless dream of a gay woman," say Messrs. de Goncourt; "a folly of expenditure, an extravagance of luxury. Millions are flung away for the caprices of fashion, for rarities in jewelry, point lace, silk and velvet, a flood of money; the

royal treasure flowing through the hands of a pretty woman upon the world of tailors, milliners, dressmakers."

All this life spent in furnishing, in giving orders and commissions, in toilettes and purchases of every sort, is wholly fantastic and capricious. Her apartment in the château of Versailles no longer suffices the Countess. Louis XV. gives her a house in the city, rue de l'Orangerie,[1] where she installs herself with her attendants and her equipages. At the beginning of the year 1769, she receives one hundred thousand livres as a life annuity on the city of Paris, and a pension of ten thousand livres on the States of Burgundy. July 24 of the same year, her generous lover, who is more and more contented with her, compliments her by presenting the beautiful château of Luciennes, bought from the Duke de Penthièvre. The favorite triumphs; she has the same retinue, riches, and position as the Marquise de Pompadour. Young, pretty, seductive, with her blue eyes and brown eyebrows, her fair hair, her little Grecian nose, her rosy lips and satin skin, her mild yet roguish expression, she shines with all the splendor of her twenty-five years. Hers is not a majestic beauty, but a sprightly and frolicsome one which retains a certain carelessness and negligence even when arrayed in the most magnificent toilettes. It cannot be denied that

[1] The house is No. 2 at present.

5211B

she possesses charm. Louis XV. seems bewitched by her. Marshal de Richelieu, who was so severe on the Marquise de Pompadour, gives the Countess Du Barry his entire approbation. The Marquise Du Deffand writes to Horace Walpole, June 25, 1769: —

"Out in the country, the other day, while the master of the house (the King) was playing whist, the head of the conspiracy (Marshal de Richelieu) set up a little game of lansquenet to teach it to the lady (Madame Du Barry). He lost two hundred and fifty louis. The master of the house jeered at him, asking him how he could have lost at such a small game; he answered by a quotation from the opera: —

"'Le plus sage
S'enflamme et s'engage
Sans savoir comment.'[1]

The master laughed and all the troupe."

There were people, however, who did not go into ecstasies over the beauty of the new favorite. In September, 1769, Horace Walpole saw her in the chapel of the château of Versailles. He did not admire her much, and thus describes the impression she made on him in a letter to George Montagu: "A first row in the balconies was kept for us. Madame Du Barry arrived over against us below, without rouge, without powder, and indeed sans avoir fait sa toilette; an odd appearance, as she was so conspicuous, close to the altar, and amidst both court

[1] The wisest takes fire and pledges himself without knowing how.

and people. She is pretty, when you consider her; yet so little striking, that I never should have asked who she was. There is nothing bold, assuming, or affected in her manner. Her husband's sister was along with her. In the Tribune above, surrounded by prelates, was the amorous and still handsome King. One could not help smiling at the mixture of piety, pomp, and carnality."

Madame Du Barry was the first to be astonished by her lot. Her transformation into a great lady seemed to her a disguise. She was still more surprised when they tried to make a political woman of her. Devoid of hatred, ambition, or calculation, she asked for nothing but to occupy herself with her toilettes and her furniture. Politics seemed to her a tedious thing. What were parliaments, the clergy, and diplomacy to her? She had a good many other things to think about. From the time when she had made her entry at court she had asked for nothing but to live at peace with all the ministers. She sent word to the Duke de Choiseul that if he wanted to be friends with her, she would go half way to meet him. The person who carried this message recalled the fact that mistresses drive out ministers, and ministers do not drive out mistresses. The Duke contented himself with replying coldly by a vague promise to grant such of Madame Du Barry's demands as he considered just.[1] The enemies of the minister had the greatest

[1] Sénac de Meilhan, *Portraits et Caractères des personnes distinguées de la fin du XVIIIe. siècle.*

difficulty, notwithstanding their incessant efforts, in persuading the inoffensive Countess to oppose him. At first her attacks on him were only skirmishes, or better, mere roguish tricks. The Marquise Du Deffand wrote to Horace Walpole, November 2, 1769: "The grandpapa" (the nickname given to Choiseul) "daily receives little affronts, such as not being named or invited for the little cabinet suppers, and, when visiting Madame Du Barry, grimaces when he is her partner at whist, — mockeries, shruggings of the shoulders; in fine, the petty revenges of a schoolgirl."

Meanwhile the friends of the Duke de Choiseul did not as yet disquiet themselves, and Madame Du Deffand wrote, to Walpole, January 15, 1770: "Dame Du Barry has no influence, and there seems no likelihood that she ever will have any; she has neither affection nor hatred for anybody; she can say what they make her say, like a parrot, but without design, interest, or passion; no one contrives to govern with a character like that." However, the security of the Marquise as to the fate of the Duke de Choiseul did not last long: "The controller-general is at the feet of Madame Du Barry, and does not blush at it," she wrote, March 3, 1770; "he says he is following the example of all ministers who want to be listened to by kings, and even to be useful to them. Just at present our friend seems well disposed; but I doubt whether the year will end without a great revolution." In the same letter she adds: "The King continues

much smitten with his dame, but without showing her much consideration; he treats her sufficiently like a wench; in fine, she will be good or bad according to him who rules her; her own character will influence nothing. She may serve the passions of others, but never with the warmth and success one has when one shares them; she will repeat her lesson; but in circumstances where she has not been inspired, her own genius will not make up for it."

At this epoch a malicious stanza got into circulation which is quoted in one of the letters of the Marquise (November 2, 1769). It was considered to sum up the complaints of the Duke de Choiseul, the friend of Madame de Pompadour, the enemy of Madame Du Barry. It was sung to the air of *Vive le Vin, Vive l'Amour.*

"Vive le roi! Foin de l'Amour!
Le drôle m'a joué d'un tour,
Qui peut confondre mon audace.
La Du Barry, pour moi de glace,
Va, dit-on, changer mes destins.
Jadis, je dus ma fortune aux catins;
Je leur devrai donc ma disgrace."[1]

Madame Du Barry let herself be dragged into

[1] Long live the King! The deuce take Love!
The rogue has played me a trick
Which may take down my presumption.
The Du Barry, cold as ice to me,
Is about, they say, to change my destiny.
Of old I owed my fortune to wantons;
I am going then to owe them my disgrace.

the struggle almost against her will. Three men urged her on: the Duke d'Aiguillon, the Abbé Terray, the Chancellor Maupeou. Surrounded by this triumvirate, the Countess smilingly entered the political lists. One can understand what indignation such an enemy must have caused a man so bold and haughty as the Duke de Choiseul. He chafed at his bit. His power was only to last some months longer. But before his downfall he was to see the arrival in France of the princess whose marriage with the Dauphin he had negotiated, that charming and poetic young girl who appeared in an aged court like a beam of pure light, that touching victim of fatality whose suave and august countenance make a striking contrast with that of the Du Barry, and whose name cannot be pronounced without an unspeakable blending of sympathy and compassion, tenderness, and respect, — Marie Antoinette.

At the moment when all minds were occupied with the coming marriage of the Archduchess with the Prince who was one day to be called Louis XVI., a novice was praying in the convent of Carmelites at Saint Denis for the safety of France, menaced by so many catastrophes. This novice was one of the daughters of Louis XV. While egotism and voluptuousness dominated in the palace of Versailles, the spirit of immolation and self-sacrifice took refuge in a convent, near the last dwelling-place of kings. Madame Du Barry was scandal; Madame Louise of France, edification.

IV

MADAME LOUISE OF FRANCE, CARMELITE NOVICE

WE are in 1770. Madame Louise of France, the youngest of the daughters of Louis XV., is thirty-two years old. "For some years," says Madame Campan, "Madame Louise had led a very retired life; I used to read to her five hours a day; my voice often betrayed the fatigue of my chest; the Princess would then prepare sugared water and place it beside me, excusing herself for making me read so long by saying it was necessary for her to finish a course of reading she had undertaken." Why is the King's daughter bent on finishing this course so quickly? That is her secret. In appearance, she is leading a luxurious life. In reality, she is silently making her mysterious apprenticeship of renunciation and immolation, accustoming herself to endure excessive cold or heat, and wearing beneath her linen the serge of the Carmelites. In the evenings, when she is alone in her room, she extinguishes her wax tapers and lights candles, so as to habituate herself to the odor of tallow, which at first had caused her unendurable repugnance. "She had a lofty

soul," says Madame Campan; "she loved great things; she used often to interrupt my reading to exclaim: 'How fine that is! How noble!' There was but one brilliant action which she could perform: to quit a palace for a cell, rich garments for a robe of frieze; she performed it."

Certain writers who, being devoid of the religious sentiment, persist in seeing the earth everywhere, and never look at heaven, have insisted on attributing the holy resolutions of Madame Louise to human motives, and barely refrained from describing a Carmelite as an ambitious intriguant. M. Honoré Bonhomme, the author of *Louis XV. et sa famille*, was better inspired when he wrote: "When the Queen died, Louis XV. had had a glimmering of repentance. People might have fancied that his morals were to be more regular; but no! Very speedily a new favorite, the Du Barry, was presented, and we know the rest. Now, it was after this signal relapse on her father's part, when she saw him fall back soul and body, and deeper than ever, into shameful disorders, that, heartbroken with sorrow, and deprived of all hope, Madame Louise hastened to demand of God, in the austerity of the cloister, not pardon for herself, — she did not need it, — not the calm and repose which were lacking to her, — she had sacrificed them, — but to ask of God, with tears and fervor, the conversion of her father, the salvation of the King."

The Countess Du Barry's formal presentation at

court took place April 22, 1769. January 30, 1770, Madame Louise charged Monseigneur de Beaumont, Archbishop of Paris, to ask the King to allow her to enter the religious state. Profoundly surprised by so unexpected a communication, Louis XV. remained silent for awhile. Then he exclaimed several times: "This is cruel! this is cruel!" and deferred his reply for a fortnight. The desired consent was at last obtained. The Abbé du Terney, the Princess's confessor, brought her the following letter from the King, dated February 20, 1770:—

"Monseigneur the Archbishop, my dear daughter, having given me an account of all that you have said and written to him, will surely have acquainted you exactly with all I said to him in reply. If it is for God alone, I cannot oppose myself to His will nor to His determination. You must have made your reflections; hence, I have nothing more to ask concerning them; it seems even that your arrangements are made; you can speak of them to your sisters when you think proper. Compiègne is not possible; you may choose any other place, and I would be very sorry to prescribe anything on the subject. I have made some involuntary sacrifices; this one will be voluntary on your part. God will give you strength to support your new state, for, the step once taken, there can be no return. I embrace you with all my heart, my dear daughter, and give you my blessing."

There was, at Saint Denis, a Carmelite convent,

so poor that the nuns had been obliged to make retrenchments in their food, already so frugal, and the baker was beginning to refuse them bread. It was this house, reduced to profound distress and threatened with dissolution for lack of pecuniary resources, that Madame Louise selected for her final refuge. At the very time when the nuns were making a novena to entreat God to provide for the existence of their community, Louis XV. gave his daughter the permission she had so ardently desired. Madame Louise still maintained absolute secrecy, especially with her sisters, whose remarks she may have dreaded. April 5, 1770, she received the following note from Louis XV., dated at Choisy: —

"I embrace you with all my heart, my dear daughter, and send you the order you spoke to me about for your departure, and I will execute what you desire for your domestics, and all your other arrangements. You will have only a word from me this evening, my little heart, for it is late." In the morning of April 11, the Princess entered a carriage, at Versailles, with a maid of honor and an equerry, and drove to Saint Denis. She wore a plain silk dress under a large black mantle, and a high bonnet adorned with a bunch of red ribbons. On reaching Saint Denis, she said: "To the Carmelites." The door of the cloister opened, and Madame Louise disappeared behind it. Her maid of honor, the Princess de Ghistelles, and her equerry, M. d'Haranguier de Quincerot, thought she would

return after having heard Mass. Their surprise can be imagined when, summoned within the convent by the Princess, they read the King's order.

During the day, the sisters of the novice learned what had occurred. At first they were in despair; but after the first involuntary anger had passed away, they felt nothing but respect for so pious a resolution. In his book on the daughters of Louis XV., which is so full of facts and documents, M. Édouard de Barthélemy has given the letters written her by Mesdames Adelaide and Sophie. This is Madame Adelaide's:—

"Thou canst fancy better than I can express what has passed and is still passing in my heart. My grief equals my astonishment; but thou art happy, and that is all I want. Pray God for me, dear heart, thou knowest my needs; they are more than ever pressing just now. I will certainly go to see thee as soon as I have strength enough, and thou canst receive me without feeling disturbed. Adieu, dear heart. I am going to *Tenebræ*, where I fear I shall be a little distracted. Love me always, and believe I shall return it well."

Here is the letter of Madame Sophie:—

"If I never spoke to thee again, dear heart, of the desire I suspected in thee to become a nun, it is because I thought thou wouldst never carry it into effect. I pardon thee with all my heart for telling me nothing about it. Thy sacrifice is beautiful, because it is voluntary. But dost think that the one

thou hast imposed on me, in leaving us, and which is not voluntary, is not as hard to bear? Be very sure, dear heart, that I love thee, that I will love thee all my life, and that when thou permittest, I will go to see thee with much eagerness. I embrace thee with all my heart."

A diplomatic circular addressed to the King's ambassadors at foreign courts notified them of the "exemplary and affecting event" which had just occurred, and Pope Clement XIV. addressed to the Most Christian King a brief which resembled a canticle of thanksgiving.

Madame Campan relates that when she went to see the Princess at the convent for the first time, she found her coming out of the laundry, where her king's daughter's hands had just been doing the washing. The novice said to her former reader at this time: "I greatly abused your young lungs for two years before executing my purpose. I knew I could read nothing here but books tending to our salvation, and I wanted to review all the historians who had interested me." Speaking afterwards of her religious vocation, she said: "Believe me, the moralists are right when they say that happiness does not dwell in palaces; I have acquired a certainty of that. If you wish to be happy, I advise you to come and enjoy a retreat where the most active mind might find full exercise in the contemplation of a better world."

The grating is closed at last upon the daughter of

Louis XV. Between her and the world the gulf has become impassable. What a contrast between the palace and the cloister! Yesterday, all splendor and magnificence, radiant galleries, marble staircases, majestic apartments; to-day, humility, poverty, a monotonous existence, the rigors of enclosure. Yesterday, robes of gold brocade, laces, precious stones, diadems; to-day, the frieze habit, the bitter chalice. Yesterday, noise, worldly animation; to-day, the silence and obscurity of the tomb.

They say that certain courtiers who did not comprehend Madame Louise, criticised or pitied her; that the Maréchale de Mirepoix called her "a mad woman, entering the cloister to annoy the court in the name of Heaven"; that the Duke d'Agen thought he proved his wit by saying: "If Madame Louise is in such a hurry to go to Paradise, it is because she wants to be certain of not spending eternity with her family."

The Marquise Du Deffand, who plays the philosopher, writes in one of her letters: "This adventure has not made a great sensation. People shrug their shoulders, pity her weakness of mind, and talk of something else."

The sarcastic Marquise compassionates a princess who, says she, "makes herself miserable for chimeras." Madame Du Deffand is mistaken; with all her intelligence, she is much more to be pitied than Madame Louise. There are a good many more chimeras in her salon than in the Carmelite convent.

As to Louis XV., he was profoundly convinced that his daughter was happy. "But, Sire," Madame Du Barry said to him one day, "Madame Louise will have a wretched fate at the convent!"—"Not at all," he replied, "she will be the most tranquil one of the family. The devotees did not invent quietism for nothing." Perhaps the voluptuous monarch himself felt, at times, a disgust for his palaces, and what one might call a homesickness for the cloister. Charles V. is not the only one who has dreamed of the monastic life. The greatest debauchees sometimes have their moments of mysticism.

The daughter of an earthly king now confides herself to the King of Heaven. As she is no longer attached to a perishable throne, but to the cross, which is immortal, she finds herself more at liberty in her voluntary captivity than she once was in the whirlpool of the world. She does not regret the crowd of courtiers who hasten to the Œil-de-Bœuf. She does not regret that palace inhabited by cares and troubles, wherein, as La Bruyère puts it, people rise from and lie down on self-interest. She does not regret those base flatteries, a deafening murmur which fatigues ear and heart alike; those protestations of zeal which are merely the calculations of egotism, ambition, and cupidity, that pompous and vain magnificence which gives not one moment of true happiness. The rules of the cloister, though hard and austere, seem to her less painful than the restrictions of etiquette. She prefers

one ardent aspiration toward the Christ, one tear of religious ecstasy, to all earthly treasures. Here there are no more scandals, no more falsities, no more infamies; here is repose, here the veritable love!

It is curious to observe that the *angel* of Madame Louise at the convent of Saint Denis, that is to say, the nun whose duty it was to initiate her into the practices and duties of a Carmelite's life, was Sister Julie, in the world Julienne de MacMahon, a daughter of that illustrious family to which belonged the Marshal who was at the head of the French government.

Several contemporary publicists have spoken with levity of certain writings connected with the religious vocation of the royal Carmelite, such as the Abbé Proyart's work, that of the Countess Drohojowska, and the Count de Chambord's letter to the Holy Father. For my part, I own that such writings seem to me profoundly affecting. Is it not good to think that not far from the boudoir where a Du Barry was degrading the royal authority, there was a little cell wherein a descendant of Saint Louis sought to avert the scourges of God by prayer? If debauchery has its priestesses of vice and scandal, chastity must have its virgins and heroines. At the side of blasphemies, abject even to indecency, there must needs be prayers ardent to exaltation. To compensate for so many outrages against the divine majesty, there must be virtues whose sublime

and enthusiastic character seems to profane eyes a sort of exaggeration, a delirium. To make folly and voluptuousness forgotten for a moment, there must be just persons who display what Saint Paul has called the folly of the cross. It is because, in spite of so many debauchees, there were still elect souls who preserved treasures of purity in the sanctuary of their consciences, that the eighteenth century was not altogether ruined, and that, when the revolution came, the women of this society, which was thought so corrupt and frivolous, recalled the force of the primitive Christians and the sacred energy of the martyrs by their greatness of soul and their firmness on the scaffold. Who knows? Perhaps if Madame Louise of France had not become a Carmelite, the august woman whom we are about to behold for the first time in the palace of Versailles would have had less dignity when confronted with her persecutors, less courage in presence of her executioners.

V

THE CHILDHOOD OF MARIE ANTOINETTE

ON All Souls Day, November 2, 1755, a formidable earthquake covered Lisbon with ruins. At Vienna there was born, on the same day, a child destined to the most tragic fate, a princess who, having like the Christ her palms and her Golgotha, was to sum up in her own person all the joys and all the anguish, all the triumphs and all the sorrows, of woman.

This existence, doomed to catastrophes which surpass the most memorable examples of ancient fatality, began in that calm which heralds the storm. The Empress Maria Theresa, a woman of both heart and genius, was equally admirable as a sovereign, wife, and mother. As simple as majestic, she needed not the prestige of etiquette to inspire veneration. A few days before Marie Antoinette was born, the Duke de Tarouka had laid a wager with the Empress that she would give birth to a son. When he lost his bet, he caused a kneeling figure to be modelled in porcelain, which was presenting to the Sovereign some tablets on which were engraven

four verses in Italian from the poet Metastasio, which may be thus translated: "I have lost. The august daughter has condemned me to pay. But it is true that if she resembles you, all the world will be the gainer."

Maria Theresa began betimes to give Marie Antoinette the most serious instructions. She showed her the shroud she had woven for herself with her own imperial hands, and taking her down into the vaults where their ancestors were sleeping: "It is to me," she said, "that people now address the homage of which they were once the object; I shall be forgotten like them." When they were out driving, the Empress and her husband gave the right of way to the most humble vehicles, and quietly took their places in the line. According to an expression of Goethe, the imperial household was only a great German citizen's family. Maria Theresa walked out with her daughters like a private person; she visited familiarly at the castles of the Counts Palfy, and those of the Esterhazy and de Kinsky princes. She gave an equally benevolent reception to a noble or a commoner, a diplomat or an artist; she made little Marie Antoinette play with little Mozart.

The young Archduchess grew up beneath this mild and salutary influence. Her father, the Emperor Francis, may have felt for her an even greater tenderness than for his other children. In 1765 he went to Innsprück, where he was to be present at the

marriage of the Archduke Leopold with a Spanish Infanta. After his journey had begun, he stopped his carriage at a short distance from Schönbrun: "Go back, and find the Archduchess Marie Antoinette," said he to a member of his suite; "I must see her again." The little Princess arrived. Her father wept as he embraced her. He invoked God's blessing on her, and even then had to make a violent effort before he could leave her. He was never to see her again. A few days later he died at Innsprück, from a sudden attack of apoplexy. Marie Antoinette remembered all her life the last look her father had bent upon her. Was not this gaze, so full of tenderness and anxiety, a presentiment? One day, Maria Theresa questioned the thaumaturgist Gassner concerning the fate of the young Princess. "Will my Antoinette be happy?" she asked him. Gassner turned pale and was silent. Urged by the Empress to reply, "Madame," said he sadly, "there are crosses for all shoulders."

But let us dispel gloomy images of the future. The most brilliant destiny is in preparation for the little Archduchess. It is she who is to unite the Hapsburghs to the Bourbons; she who is to be Queen of France. Maria Theresa likes to cherish this beautiful dream. In 1766 an influential Parisian woman, whose salon had become celebrated throughout Europe, Madame Geoffrin, goes to Poland to visit Stanislas Poniatowski. She stops in Vienna, where she meets a reception of which she is very proud.

"I think I must be dreaming," she writes to M. Bautin, Receiver-General of Finances, June 12, 1766; "I am as well known here as in the rue Saint Honoré, and for the last fortnight my journey has caused an incredible commotion." Speaking of Marie Antoinette in the same letter, Madame Geoffrin adds: "The Empress has recommended me to write to France that I have seen this little one, and that I find her beautiful."

Madame Geoffrin took the Princess on her lap. "Here," said she, "is a little girl that I would very much like to take with me." — "Take her, take her!" gaily replied the Empress, who was thinking of Versailles and the Dauphin. From that time Maria Theresa sought to form the future Dauphiness to the likeness of the court of France. Language, literature, novels, history, fashions, theatrical pieces, books, almanacs, engravings, everything that surrounded the young Archduchess, was French.

As M. Feuillet de Conches has said in the eloquent preface to his collection, "the wind of France breathed through the beautiful fair tresses of Marie Antoinette." She danced with Noverre, declaimed with Sainville, recited Racine's tragedies and La Fontaine's fables with Dufresne. A famous hairdresser, Larsonneur, was brought from Paris, and with him milliners and dressmakers for the service of the young Princess. Her true adornment was her natural grace. As has been said by Madame the Countess Armaillé, in a charming study which she calls *La*

Mère et la Fille, "certain female faces seem to have no brilliancy except when surrounded by the animation of festivities; others harmonize with the freshness of nature, the gentle poesy of solitary country places. It was this kind of beauty that Marie Antoinette possessed. Her supple and slender figure, the grace and lightness of her bearing, recalled the heroines of German legends. Undine was not more charming when, rising from the bosom of the waves, she wandered for a time among mortal beings. Her blue eyes, whose limpid tint was compared to that of the waters of the Danube, were both soft and sparkling. Her mouth, rosy and smiling, seemed to receive an added grace from a little dimple in her chin. Her hair, of an ashy blond, drawn back in accordance with the fashion of the day, left visible her pure, haughty forehead and her well-defined and graceful neck. Everything in her breathed distinction, kindness, candor." Though no longer a child, she was not yet a woman. She had that blending of intelligence and ignorance, wit and simplicity, which has such grace and charm. Already a shade of melancholy sometimes overspread that pure and radiant visage, which was lighted up by so sweet a smile. "Poor women!" has said a young girl, Mademoiselle Rosa Ferrucci, whose touching story has been related by the Abbé Perreyve, "poor women! we are weaker than the leaves that the first breeze tears off and scatters, and childhood is scarcely over when our heart, which knows only how to love and

suffer, is rent by a thousand contrary thoughts, joyful and sorrowful."

Versailles appeared to Marie Antoinette in a brilliant background. The Abbé de Vermond, a French ecclesiastic who had been her preceptor since 1768, told her wonderful things about this dazzling abode where she was to shine with so great a splendor. But the affectionate soul of the Princess was afflicted by the thought that she must leave her cherished mother, her beloved family, the honest Viennese, who were so devoted to their sovereigns. Nowadays, when sovereigns give their daughters in marriage, they have almost the certainty of seeing them again. But it was not so then. Separations were eternal. One can understand what Maria Theresa suffered when she reflected: Soon this beloved daughter of whom I am so proud will depart forever. Soon I must give her a last blessing, a last embrace. Like many mothers, the Empress was afflicted by an event she had most ardently desired. The union, so favorable to the Austrian policy, was decided on. Marie Antoinette was to become the Dauphiness of France. The nearer the moment of departure came, the more the Empress was affected. She took her daughter on her lap, embraced her, made her sleep in her own room. Clinging to the treasure she was about to lose, she would have liked to arrest the march of time. Marie Antoinette was not less sad and anxious. January 21, 1770, she received the nuptial ring sent her by the Dauphin, and just

twenty-three years later to a day. . . . But no, we will not think yet of the final catastrophes.

The Marquis de Durfort repaired to the palace on April 16, and in the name of the Most Christian King officially demanded the Archduchess for the Dauphin. On the 17th, the Princess renounced her rights to the Austrian succession. On the 18th, the fêtes began at Vienna and were prolonged until the 21st, the day set for the departure of the Archduchess. The 19th, she was married by proxy. The Dauphin was represented by the Archduke Maximilian. The signing of the imperial register took place at the palace of the Burg. It is said that Marie Antoinette's hand trembled when she took the pen. The Dauphin having expressed a wish that the Archduchess herself should signify her consent to the marriage, Marie Antoinette had written to him: "I thank you for the expressions so full of benevolence which you employ towards me; I am profoundly touched and honored by them, and I feel that such goodness on your part imposes obligations on me. The examples and lessons of my glorious and tender mother have taught me to accomplish all my duties, and, with the help of God, I hope by every effort to render myself worthy of the new destiny created for me. You have kindly asked that my consent to your choice should accompany that of the Empress-queen; you say you need to receive me from myself also. I may answer, since she authorizes me to do so, that I have received my mother's

orders with as much pleasure as respect. You will find in me a faithful and devoted wife, having no other thought than that of putting into practice the means of pleasing you and meriting your attachment."

The city of Vienna is gay and sorrowful at once. Shouts of joy mingle with tears. A three-days retreat, ended by the reception of communion, is followed by a visit to the tombs of the emperors. The Archduchess kneels down and invokes the souls of her ancestors. At last it is time to depart. The 21st of April is here. Adieu patriarchal residence of the Burg! Farewell ye shades of Schönbrun. Adieu blue, limpid lakes of Laxenbourg! Adieu good Viennese who weep for the young exile! Ah! whether she be a peasant or an empress, the mother who for the last time beholds her daughter's face and hears her voice, follows her with her eyes and confides her to Providence; then, seeking her, but finding her no more, she returns alone to her chamber, closes the door and falls upon her knees; the mother who has felt the anguish of that heart-rending torture, separation, will comprehend what passed in the heart of Maria Theresa. This departure of Marie Antoinette reminds me of a once popular but now forgotten chanson, the distant echo of which affects me at this moment, doubtless because my mother sang it to me when I was a child: —

"Ici commence ton voyage.
Si tu n'allais pas revenir! . . .
Ta pauvre mère est sans courage
Pour te quitter, pour te bénir.

Travaille bien, fais ta prière.
La prière donne du cœur,
Et quelquefois pense à ta mère,
Cela te portera bonheur.
Adieu, ma fille, adieu!
À la grâce de Dieu!...

"Elle s'en va, douce exilée,
Gagner son pain sous d'autres cieux;
Longtemps encor, dans la vallée,
Sa mère la suivit des yeux,
Puis, lorsque sa douleur amère
N'eut plus sa fille pour témoin,
Elle pleura, la pauvre mère,
L'enfant qui lui disait de loin:
Adieu, ma mère, adieu!
À la grâce de Dieu."[1]

---

[1] Here thy journey begins.
If thou wert never to return!...
Thy poor mother has no courage
To leave thee, to bless thee.
Labor well, say thy prayer;
Prayer gives courage;
And think sometimes of thy mother,
That will bring thee happiness.
Adieu, my child, adieu!
To God's grace I commend thee!...

She goes, the gentle exile,
To earn her bread 'neath other skies;
A long time yet, in the valley,
The poor mother follows her with her eyes;
Then, when her bitter sorrow
Is no longer witnessed by her child,
She weeps, poor mother,
For the child who says from afar:
Adieu, mother, adieu!
To God's grace I commend thee!...

Weber says in his Memoirs: "One cannot easily shake off the superstition of presentiments, when one has seen the farewells of Marie Antoinette to her family, her servants, and her country. Men and women yielded to the same expressions of grief. No one returned home until after losing sight of the last courier who followed her, and then only to lament in the privacy of the family a common loss." The die was cast! Departing never to return, the young girl of fourteen was urged by fatality toward the abyss.

VI

MARIE ANTOINETTE'S ARRIVAL IN FRANCE

AT the moment when Maria Theresa pressed Marie Antoinette to her heart for the last time, she gave her a precious paper containing the wisest counsels. This masterpiece of maternal solicitude, written by the Empress's own hand, was entitled: *A Rule to be read Every Month.* It began thus: "This 21st of April, the day of departure.— On awaking, you will kneel down and say your morning prayers as soon as you arise, and also a short spiritual reading, even if it were only for half a quarter of an hour, before occupying yourself with anything else and without having spoken to any person. All depends on the good beginning of the day and the intention with which one commences it, which can render even indifferent actions good and meritorious." Maria Theresa then went on into all the details of a pious life. "I do not know," she said, "whether it is the custom in France to ring the *Angélus;* but collect your thoughts at that hour, if not in public, at least inwardly. . . . If your confessor approves, you will approach the Sacraments

every six weeks, also on the great feasts, and especially those of the Blessed Virgin; on those days, or the vigil of them, do not forget the special devotion of your family toward the Blessed Virgin, whose particular protection it has experienced on all occasions. Read no book, however unimportant, without having first asked the approval of your confessor. This is a point especially necessary in France, where books full of entertainment and erudition are constantly appearing, but among them are some which, under this veil of respectability, are pernicious to religion and morality. I conjure you then, my daughter, not to read any book, not even a brochure, without the advice of your confessor; I require of you, my dear daughter, this most real mark of your affection and obedience to the counsels of a good mother who has no end in view but your salvation and your happiness."

The monthly regulation terminated with these simple and affecting words: "Never forget the anniversary of your late father's death, nor mine at the same time; meanwhile, you can take that of my birthday to pray for me."

The young betrothed was on her way to France. The heavens were illuminated by the joyous sunshine of spring. "All nature was smiling at this new Iphigenia who was advancing with the same confidence to marriage and the sword. God of mercy! Why didst Thou not arrest that royal progress, those triumphs of grandeur, youth, and beauty! Why didst Thou not withdraw this august child from the

fatal destiny that awaited her! Ah! how sweet her death would have been in comparison to that reserved for her at the hands of execrable tormentors! Austria would have received the mortal remains of the daughter of the Hapsburghs with pious emotion. The prayers of a Christian mother would have borne her virginal soul to the eternal dwellings, and France, cast down by a blow so unexpected, would also have lamented this young Princess, too quickly ravished from its hopes."[1]

Marie Antoinette reached Schutteren, the last German town before Kehl and the Rhine bridge, May 6, 1770. She saw France for the first time. She heard the sound of the Rhine waters, those poetic, majestic waters, so often, alas, troubled and tinged with blood, those waters which now wash two German shores, but which then flowed beside a French one. On the large island of the Rhine a pavilion had been erected, which was called the pavilion of the Exchange. It comprised a large hall with a room on either side; one of these was intended for the lords and ladies of the court of Vienna who had been charged to accompany the Princess to the threshold of her new country; the other for her French suite, her lady of honor, the Countess de Noailles, her lady of the bedchamber, the Duchess de Cossé, her four ladies of the palace, the Count de Saulx-Tavannes, her chevalier

[1] Madame the Countess d'Arnaillé, *La Mère et la Fille*, (Maria Theresa and Marie Antoinette).

of honor, the Count de Tessé, her first equerry, the Bishop of Chartres, her first chaplain, her officers, equerries, and body-guards. Here took place the symbolical ceremony of the delivery. The pavilion was hung with tapestries. The choice of these was unfortunate. "It was nothing less," said Goethe, who was then a student of the University of Strasburg, "than the history of Jason, Medea, and Creusa. On the left side of the throne one saw the unfortunate affianced a prey to the torments of the most cruel death. On the right, the furious Jason was deploring the loss of his children, lying dead at his feet, while the Fury who had slain them was taking her flight through the air on her chariot drawn by dragons." On beholding these preparations, the future author of *Faust* exclaimed: "What! Is it possible that at the first step a young princess takes in her new kingdom, such an example of the most horrible marriage possible could be placed so inconsiderately before her eyes? Was there no one among the architects and decorators of France able to comprehend that a picture is a representation, that it moves the senses and the soul, that it excites presentiments?" The weather was stormy and dark as Marie Antoinette entered the pavilion of the Exchange. A heavy cloud which veiled the horizon on the Strasburg side was slowly moving toward the great island of the Rhine. The three commissioners appointed by the King were waiting in the central hall. Toward noon the door of the Austrian salon was

opened, and the Dauphiness appeared. She walked to the platform in the middle of the room, and there listened to the reading of the full powers and the acts of delivery. When this formality was ended, the members of the Austrian suite passed for the last time in front of the former Archduchess, kissed her hand, and then returned to the Austrian salon, the door of which was closed again. The Dauphiness changed her entire apparel. "When her dress had been completely renewed, even to her chemise and stockings, so that she should retain nothing from a foreign court (an etiquette always observed in this circumstance), the doors were reopened, the young Princess came forward, looking about for the Countess de Noailles, and then threw herself into her arms, asking her, with tears in her eyes and a candor that came from her heart, to direct and counsel her, and to be in all things her guide and support. It was impossible to refrain from admiring her aërial deportment; a single smile was enough to attract one, and in this enchanting being in whom the splendor of French gaiety shone forth, an indescribable but august serenity, perhaps, also, the somewhat proud attitude of her head and shoulders, betrayed the daughter of the Cæsars."[1] The ceremony of the *exchange* was terminated. On reaching the French side of the Rhine, the Dauphiness got into the King's carriage, and started for Strasburg.

[1] Memoirs of Madame Campan.

Then the storm broke which had been threatening for some hours. The pavilion of the Exchange was submerged under a driving rain. The shouting of the crowd mingled with the claps of thunder.

The next day, May 8, Marie Antoinette repaired to the Strasburg cathedral. A young prelate, Prince Louis de Rohan, stood in front of the door, in a chasuble of cloth of gold, the cross in his hand, the mitre on his head. "Madame," said he, "the two nations reunited in this temple are eager to render eternal thanksgivings to the God of empires, who, by august and longed-for ties, is about to set the seal to their common felicity, and to cement an alliance the aim of which has been to protect religion and bring about the reign of peace. You see the joy of Alsace breaking forth; France awaits you to crown its wishes. In the movements of joy about to manifest themselves, recognize, Madame, the same sentiment which caused tears to flow in Vienna, and which leaves the keenest and most profound regrets in the hearts of those from whom you are separated. Thus it is that the Archduchess Antoinette is already known even where she has not yet been seen; often this is merely the advantage of birth; for you, Madame, it is the right of your virtues and your graces; it is, above all, the reputation of those natural and beneficent qualities which the cares of an ever-memorable mother have perfected in you. Among us you will be the living image of this cherished Empress, who has long been the admiration of

Europe, as she will be that of posterity. It is the soul of Maria Theresa which is about to unite itself to the soul of the Bourbons. A new age of gold should spring from so beautiful a union, and our nephews, under the happy empire of Antoinette and Louis Augustus, will see that welfare perpetuated which we are enjoying under the reign of Louis the Well-Beloved." The man who employed this language was the future Cardinal de Rohan, the sorry hero of the affair of the necklace.

Paris, Versailles, all France, was in commotion. Nothing was talked of but the arrival of the Dauphiness. Upholsterers, sent from city to city, prepared apartments for her. Sixty perfectly new travelling-carriages awaited her at Strasburg. At Paris, people were going to the court dressmakers to admire the robes intended for the forthcoming festivities. A piece of fireworks was talked of, the bouquet of which, composed of thirty thousand rockets, was said to have cost four thousand louis (nearly fifty thousand francs of the present money).

The Dauphiness continued her route. Along her way the towns were joyful and the country places in festal array. The ground was covered with flowers. Young girls, gowned in white, offered bouquets to Marie Antoinette. The bells were ringing merrily. From every side resounded cries of "Long live the Dauphiness! Long live the Dauphin!" The road was obstructed by the crowd of spectators; the curtains of the Princess's carriage were drawn

up, and everybody could contemplate at leisure her beauty, her enchanting smile, her sweet expression. Some young peasants said to each other "How pretty our Dauphiness is!" A lady who was in the carriage called her attention to this flattering speech. "Madame," replied the Dauphiness, "the French look at me with indulgent eyes."

To all this succeeded the official harangues, a series of dithyrambs in honor of the young Princess. One orator wished to speak to her in German. "Monsieur," said she, "after to-day I understand no language but French." At Nancy she piously visited the tombs of her ancestors, the Princes of Lorraine. At Rheims, thinking of the future ceremony of the coronation, she said: "This is a city which I hope not to see again for a long time." Some leagues from Compiègne she met the Duke de Choiseul, whom she received as a friend of her family. This was the 14th of May, 1770. Several minutes later, the King and the Dauphin, followed by a numerous escort, made their appearance at the cross-roads of the Pont-du-Berne, in the forest of Compiègne. Marie Antoinette at once alighted, and threw herself on the grass, at the feet of Louis XV., who hastened to raise and embrace her.

The Dauphin, more abashed than she was, scarcely dared to look at her, and, according to the official expression, "saluted her on the cheek."

The next day they left Compiègne for Versailles. When passing through Saint Denis, Marie Antoi-

nette expressed a wish to see her aunt, Madame Louise, the Carmelite novice. She entered the convent, with the King, at six o'clock in the evening, May 15th. A letter of the Carmelite, which is among the manuscripts of the National Library, says, concerning this visit: "The King asked to have the nuns brought in that I might show them Madame the Dauphiness. She is, my reverend mother, a perfect princess as far as her face, her figure, and her manners are concerned, and, which is infinitely more precious, they say she is eminently pious. Her physiognomy has an air of blended grandeur, modesty, and sweetness. The King, Mesdames, and above all Monseigneur the Dauphin, appear enchanted with her. They vie with each other in saying: 'She is incomparable.'"

There were immense crowds all along their route. The air resounded with enthusiastic acclamations. Marie Antoinette had the tact to attribute the honor of this to Louis XV. "The French," said she, "never see enough of their King; they could not treat me more kindly than by proving that they know how to love him whom I am already accustomed to regard as a second father." Marie Antoinette slept at the château of La Muette the night of May 15th, and it was there that the King presented her, among other jewels, with the famous pearl necklace, threaded on a single string, which was brought to France by Anne of Austria, and destined by her for the queens and dauphinesses. The next day, Marie

Antoinette arrived at Versailles; she did not behold unmoved that celebrated palace which then played so great a part in France and Europe, and of which she had heard so much. She passed through the castle gate at ten in the morning, and entered the marble court, where she was received by the King and the Dauphin.

VII

THE MARRIAGE FESTIVITIES OF MARIE ANTOINETTE

WE have just seen the Dauphiness arriving at the château of Versailles. It is ten o'clock on the morning of the 16th of May, 1770. In a little while the nuptial benediction will be given to the spouses. Every glance is fixed on the young Princess with respectful curiosity. She is in morning dress, and her hair is carelessly arranged. Presently she will reappear in the dazzling wedding toilette. This is her portrait as drawn by Bachaumont: "She is very well made, symmetrical in all her members. Her hair is a beautiful blonde; one fancies it will some day be a pale chestnut. Her forehead is fine; her face, a somewhat long, but a graceful, oval; her eyebrows as well marked as a blonde's can be. Her eyes are blue without being dull, and sparkle with a vivacity full of intelligence. Her nose is aquiline, rather thin at the tip. Her mouth is small; her lips are thick, especially the under one, which one knows to be the Austrian lip. Her skin is of dazzling whiteness, and she has a natural color which needs no rouge. Her bearing

is that of an archduchess, but her dignity is tempered by sweetness. It is difficult to see this Princess without feeling a mingled respect and tenderness."

At one o'clock the Dauphiness, in full dress, and followed by a numerous cortège, goes to the chapel with the Dauphin. The officiating priest is the Archbishop of Rheims, Monseigneur de La Roche-Aymon, Grand Almoner of France. The pair advance to the altar and kneel down. The chapel is decked with flowers and garlands, and glitters with a thousand lights. The Archbishop blesses thirteen pieces of gold and a gold ring. These he presents to the Dauphin, who puts the ring on the fourth finger of the left hand of the Dauphiness, and afterwards gives her the thirteen gold pieces. After the "Our Father" has been said, the canopy of silver brocade is held over them by the Bishop of Senlis on the side of the Prince, and the Bishop of Chartres on that of the Princess. The spouses, profoundly moved, plight each other an affection which death itself will not have the power to interrupt.

At this moment all Paris is at Versailles. The people have been coming on foot since daybreak. The citizens have been arriving, some on hired horses, some in cabs, some in carriages from livery stables. The park is thronged by an immense crowd. Alas! The sad omens are about to be renewed. At three in the afternoon the sky is overcast by clouds. Rain pours down in torrents. The thunder rumbles. Every one seeks shelter. There

is a general panic. In the evening the weather is so bad that the fireworks cannot be set off. The illuminations are drowned in rain; the streets and squares of Versailles are like a desert.

But if the approaches to the château are dismal in the evening, it is dazzling within. All the splendors of aristocracy, riches, luxury, and the fine arts are accumulated there. There is a game of lansquenet in the Gallery of Mirrors, and a supper is served *au grand couvert* in the hall known as the Queen's Antechamber (No. 117 of M. Soulié's *Notice du Musée*). The next day, May 17, the new theatre, begun in 1753, and designed by the architect Gabriel, is opened for the first time. (This is now the Senate Chamber at Versailles.) The piece presented is the opera of *Persée*, words by Quinault, music by Lulli. May 19, a grand dress ball, opened by the Dauphin and the Dauphiness, is given in this new play-house.

That morning, Madame Du Deffand had written to Horace Walpole: "There have been bickerings without number; the minuet which is to be given this evening by Mademoiselle de Lorraine, has vexed a great many people." The minuet, in fact, is a great affair, and the whole court is in commotion over it. What is it all about? Louis XV., in order to be agreeable to the Empress Maria Theresa, has decided that Mademoiselle de Lorraine, on account of her relationship to the Dauphiness, shall dance a minuet immediately after the princes and princesses of the royal family. People have taken the notion

this displays a tendency to establish for the house of Lorraine an intermediate rank between the princes of the blood and the great nobles. Thereupon ensues a flood of jealousy and anger. The dukes unite to convoke an assembly of the principal members of the nobility at the house of the Bishop of Noyon, a brother of Marshal de Broglie. There they draw up a grand memorial to the King, in which they say: "Sire, the great lords and nobles of the realm lay with confidence at the foot of the throne the just alarms awakened in them by the widespread rumors that Your Majesty has been solicited to grant the house of Lorraine a rank immediately after the princes of the blood, and that you have ordered that at the dress ball of Monsieur the Dauphin's marriage, Mademoiselle de Lorraine shall dance before all the ladies of the court. . . . They believe, Sire, that they would be lacking in what is due to their birth if they did not manifest to you how greatly a distinction as humiliating to them as it is novel, would add to the grief of losing the advantage they have always had of not being separated from Your Majesty and the royal family by any intermediate rank. In all states, the grandeur of the highest ranks denotes that of the nations, and the grandeur of the nations makes that of the kings. It would be to doubt the pre-eminence of France in Europe, to doubt the pre-eminence of those who, in the words of one of your ancestors, make a part of its honor and the essential honor of its kings." All that for a minuet!

The public is rather amused by the presentation of this request by a bishop. On seeing certain new names among the old ones signed to it, some one remarks that the descendants of such or such persons would some day say with pride: "One of our ancestors signed the famous request of the minuet, at the marriage of the grandson of Louis XV.; so our name was then reckoned among the most illustrious of the monachy." The request was parodied as follows: —

"Sire, les grands de vos États
Verront avec beaucoup de peine
Une princesse de Lorraine
Sur eux au bal prendre le pas.
Si Votre Majesté projette
De les flétrir d'un tel affront,
Ils quitteront la cadenette,
Et laisseront là les violons.
Avisez-y, la ligue est faite.
Signe: l'Evêque de Noyon,
La Veaupalière, Beaufremont,
Clermont, Laval et De Villette."[1]

[1] Sire, the great of your state
Behold with much pain
A princess of Lorraine
Preferred before them at the ball.
If Your Highness project
This affront to inflict,
They will cut off their queues,
And all dancing refuse.
Take heed: all is said,
The league has been made.
Signed: the Bishop of Noyon,
La Veaupalière, Beaufremont,
Clermont, Laval and De Villette.

This is a new Fronde, a veritable insurrection. Louis XV. replies to the request by the following note: "The ambassador of the Emperor and the Empress-queen has asked me, on the part of his masters, to show some mark of distinction to Mademoiselle de Lorraine on the present occasion of the marriage of my grandson with the Archduchess Marie Antoinette. The dance at the ball being the only thing which could entail no consequences, since the choice of dancers depends solely on my will, without distinction of place, rank, or dignities, excepting the princes and princess of my rank, who cannot be compared or put in rank with any other Frenchmen; and being unwilling, moreover, to innovate in anywise on what is practised at my court, I rely upon it that the great and the nobles of my realm, seeing the fidelity, submission, attachment, and even friendship which they have always shown to me and my predecessors, will never be the occasion of anything that might displease me, especially in this occurrence, wherein I desire to prove my gratitude to the Empress for the present she has made me, which I hope, as you do, will cause the happiness of the remainder of my days." Notwithstanding this, Louis XV. is obliged to go to the length of a threat. The ball at last takes place. Mademoiselle de Lorraine dances the minuet which provoked so many quarrels. Fireworks are set off the same evening on the terrace of the château, and are succeeded by an illumination of the park, terminating,

at the extremity of the grand canal, in a splendid decoration representing the Temple of the Sun. The canal is covered with gaily decked barks. The great fountains are playing amidst the illuminations. The equestrian statue of the King is resplendent. The principal decoration represents the Temple of Hymen. Surrounded by a sort of parapet at the four corners of which are dolphins who are vomiting flame from their yawning mouths, this multicolored temple rests against the statue of Louis XV. Near the statue, on the Seine side, rises the bastion from which the rockets stream upward in glittering sheaves. Acclamations resound. The crowd utter shouts of joy. All of a sudden a misdirected rocket falls on the yew trees and sets them afire. At the same time, the column of sightseers who are making their way to the boulevards though the rue Royale meets another column which is going toward Place Louis XV. They come into collision. The arrival of the firemen adds to the confusion. The moats of the Tuileries and the gardens of the place are so many precipices over which a quantity of victims fall. The cries of the wounded increase the terror. There is nothing but dead and dying people. All is horror and desolation on this accursed place, destined, before the end of the century, to be the scene of so many crimes.

At this moment a carriage, coming from the Cours-la-Reine, arrives at the Champs-Elysées. In this carriage is a young woman, still more adorned by the

splendor of her grace and beauty than by the glitter of the precious stones shining in her hair and on her dress. It is the Dauphiness, entering Paris for the first time, — the Dauphiness, who wishes to see the illuminations of this place, marked by fatality. She is reflecting that to-day there has been no tempest, that the sky is clear this time, and that all hearts are glad. She herself rejoices to see this city of Paris, so beautiful and famous. But what is that she hears? Are those cries of joy or of terror? The carriage stops. The Dauphiness asks what is going on. She is answered that blood is flowing on Place Louis XV.; that the number of the dead, though unknown as yet, is considerable, and that it will not do to go any further in a city so grievously stricken. The carriage retraces its road. Marie Antoinette returns disconsolate to Versailles, while the dead are being taken to the cemetery of the Madeleine, where, some years later, other victims will be deposited. Thus terminated the nuptial festivities of the martyr King and Queen. Such is the prologue to the tragedy which will wring tears from future eyes; such are the first rumblings of the most terrible of tempests.

VIII

THE DAUPHINESS AND THE ROYAL FAMILY IN 1770

THE painful impression produced by the catastrophe on Place Louis XV. was soon dissipated. It was not long before it ceased to be spoken of except for the sake of praising the good feeling of the youthful pair, who had devoted their entire income for a year to the succor of the families stricken by the disaster. At this time, Marie Antoinette excited an almost frenzied admiration. France was literally raving over this fifteen-year-old Dauphiness, in whose honor the formulas of laudation and enthusiasm were exhausted. People compared her to a consoling angel, a torch of hope, a morning star. There was a veritable lyrism, an interminable series of mythological comparisons, with the Venus de' Medici, the Atalanta of Marly, Flora, goddess of gardens, Hebe, radiant image of youth, Juno, queen of Olympus. France was on its knees. When this admirable Dauphiness made her ceremonious entry into Paris, her carriage disappeared under a rain of flowers. Prostrated before the altar at Notre Dame, the Princess seemed a celestial being, an ideal repre-

sentation of goodness and purity, poesy and prayer. When she showed herself on the balcony of the Tuileries, there was an explosion of transport. "*Mon Dieu*, how many people!" she exclaimed. "Madame," said the Duke de Brissac, "with all due deference to Monseigneur the Dauphin, they are all lovers who are looking at you."

The Dauphin was good, honest, worthy of respect; his devotion, his charity, the solid qualities of his heart, his love for the people, his humane and Christian sentiments, pointed him out as an object of public esteem; but it must be confessed that his appearance was not attractive. There was something awkward in his gait, something wandering and uncertain in his glance, something abrupt in his manners, something rude in the sound of his voice, something heavy in his whole person. One might have thought he was always afraid of being misled or betrayed. He kept himself on the defensive, embarrassed in spite of the elevation of his rank, doubtful of himself in spite of the eulogies of those who flattered him, and seeming haughty at times through the very excess of his timidity.

His two brothers did not resemble him in the least. The Count de Provence and the Count d'Artois were as self-confident as he was modest and reserved. One, the future Louis XVIII., was a wit, a great admirer of Horace, always ready with happy quotations, adroit, intelligent, clever, remarkable for precocious prudence and a wisely dissimulated ambi-

tion. The other, the future Charles X., was a young man, or rather a roguish boy, witty, full of gaiety and high spirits, already showing plainly that he would love women, horses, and pleasures to madness. The two sisters of the three brothers, Madame Clotilde, the future Queen of Sardinia, and Madame Elisabeth, the future martyr, were, at the time of Marie Antoinette's arrival in France, two amiable and good little girls to whom the Dauphiness became sincerely attached.

She displayed, also, a sincere affection for Louis XV., who, on his side, showed her much attention and sympathy. On seeing this charming Dauphiness, so admired and so admirable, the old King experienced the satisfaction felt by Louis XIV. when the Duchess of Burgundy arrived at Versailles. The seductive daughter of the German Cæsars restored life and movement to those vast apartments of the Queen, which had been deserted since the death of Marie Leczinska. She had the chamber successively occupied by the wife of Louis XIV., the Duchess of Bavaria, the Duchess of Burgundy, and the wife of Louis XV.[1] She rose between nine and ten in the morning, dressed, said her prayers, then breakfasted and went to see her aunts, where she usually found the King. The entries took place shortly before noon. The Dauphiness rouged herself and washed her hands before everybody. At noon, she was pres-

[1] Room No. 115 of M. Soulié's *Notice du Musée.*

ent at Mass in the chapel. After Mass, she dined in public, with the Dauphin, in the room known as the Queen's antechamber.[1] "The ushers," says Madame Campan, "suffered all decently dressed people to enter; the sight was the delight of persons from the country. At the dinner hour there was nobody to be met on the stairs but honest folks, who, after having seen the Dauphiness take her soup, went to see the princes eat their bouilli, and then ran till they were out of breath to behold Mesdames at their dessert." Dinner was over at half-past one. The Dauphiness then went to the apartments of the Dauphin, which were just underneath hers, and afterwards returned to her room, where she embroidered, read, wrote, and took lessons in literature and on the harpsichord; a promenade in the park and the environs, one or two visits to Mesdames, play from seven o'clock until nine, then supper, and then to bed at eleven; such was the Princess's way of life. Her principal society was that of her aunts, Mesdames Adelaide, Victoire, and Sophie, who in 1770 had arrived at the respective ages of thirty-eight, thirty-seven, and thirty-six. All three had remained unmarried. In spite of their exemplary moral conduct, they had their defects. Madame Adelaide liked to meddle in everything. She thought she had influence over her father, and the ministers were obliged to reckon with her.

[1] Room No. 117 of M. Soulié's *Notice du Musée.*

Madame Victoire usually followed the directions of her elder sister, although her own mind was not inactive. As to Madame Sophie, she was upright but indolent. "Never did I see anybody," says Madame Campan, "who had such a frightened look; she walked with extreme rapidity, and to recognize without looking at the people who made way for her, she had acquired a habit of glancing, sideways, like a hare. This Princess was so exceedingly diffident that one might be with her daily, for years together, without hearing her utter a single word. . . . There were occasions, however, when she became all at once affable and condescending, and manifested the most communicative good nature; this was when there was a storm; she was afraid of it, and such was her alarm that she then approached the humblest persons and would ask them a thousand obliging questions; a flash of lightning made her squeeze their hands; a peal of thunder would drive her to embrace them."

The youngest daughter of Louis XV., Madame Louise, was at the Carmelite convent of Saint Denis, and we have seen that the Dauphiness visited her there before going to Versailles. She received the habit, September 10, 1770, and Marie Antoinette was present at the ceremony. The Mass was said by the Papal Nuncio. Madame Louise of France, in religion Sister Thérèse Augustine, received communion. Before taking the frieze habit of Carmel, the Princess put on for the last time a royal vestment, a robe em-

broidered with silver and besprent with flowers of gold. Resplendent with the lustre of jewels, her head covered with a diadem, and beside her the lords and ladies who once composed her household, she made her appearance through clouds of incense. One might have thought it an apotheosis. A discourse was pronounced by the Bishop of Troyes which was so affecting that, according to the Abbé Proyart, who describes the solemnity, everybody was wiping away tears except the courageous woman who caused them to flow. Then all the pomp disappeared. After having been absent for a moment, the King's daughter returned, dressed as a Carmelite, and received from the hands of the Dauphiness the mantle and the religious veil.

IX

MARIE ANTOINETTE AND MADAME DU BARRY

SURROUNDED by admiration and universal homage, Marie Antoinette appears at the summit of happiness. On the surface, her destiny is magnificent. But the depths of her heart are already sorrowful. The inexplicable coldness of her husband is not her only chagrin. Young as she is, she already begins to see the snares of every kind which malicious people are laying for her. Naïve, gentle, ingenuous, she has been transported in spite of herself into an atmosphere of mean passions, Machiavellian calculations, and interminable intrigues. She is perforce the object of minute and often malicious inspection. All eyes are fixed upon her. Under an appearance of hyperbolical eulogies and enthusiastic adulations there are many criticisms, many jealousies; and if one could believe it, many hatreds. Some people begrudged the Dauphiness her youth and beauty. Converted coquettes, old maids, ambitious or intriguing women, find it hard to endure this superiority of birth, rank, grace, and beauty. Envy skilfully conceals itself under the mask of politics. The Dauphiness is censured as rep-

resenting the Austrian alliance; an alliance which, they say, is contrary to the traditions of French diplomacy. They have a spite against her for being the daughter of the great Empress whose genius has wrought prodigies. The creatures of Madame Du Barry are offended by the young couple to whom belongs the future, and who are at present like the mute protest of virtue against vice, what is honest against what is scandalous. All the "Basils" of the court, and God knows there are plenty of them, would already be glad to begin softly, very quietly, on the sly, the calumnious murmurs whose *crescendo* is terrible.

One of Marie Antoinette's sufferings came from the obligation of meeting the Du Barry, that worthless woman who wanted to treat with her as power to power, that woman whom Maria Theresa, perhaps a trifle too politic, had ordered her to treat with deference, out of respect for Louis XV.; that woman who is the enemy of the Duke de Choiseul, the principal partisan of the Austrian alliance at the court of Versailles. Revolted in her youthful pride, throwing back her fine and haughty head, the Dauphiness remembers the blood which flows in her veins, the lightning which flashes in her eyes, and the daughter of Cæsars conceives disgust for the favorite who is debasing the throne. She writes to Maria Theresa, July 9, 1770: "The King shows me a thousand kindnesses, and I love him tenderly, but it is pitiable to see the weakness he has for Madame Du Barry, who is

the most stupid and impertinent creature imaginable." The two women are on opposite sides in politics; one desires Choiseul's retention in the ministry, the other his dismissal. Two camps are formed, the excitement is keen; Madame Du Barry will triumph. The Duke de Choiseul, intoxicated by success, and long accustomed to vanquish all obstacles, has come to believe himself not merely necessary, but indispensable. The powerful minister would have been willing to say of his enemies just what the Duke de Guise said shortly before he was struck down: "They would not dare." The political chessboard was so complicated, that a man like him, who knew all the pieces so well, believed that Louis XV. would not have the courage to dismiss him. Baron de Gleichen, one of Choiseul's best friends, thought him imprudent to the point of blundering. "It would have been very easy for him," says the Baron in his curious *Souvenirs*, "to come to terms with Madame Du Barry, who would have asked nothing better than to be delivered from the rapacious and tyrannous claws of her brother-in-law, her protectors, and all the roués whose instrument she was. She was a good-natured creature, moreover, who disliked being employed to do harm, and whose joyous humor would have made her dote on M. de Choiseul as soon as she began to know him. The King would certainly have done the impossible to favor and consolidate the union between his favorite and his minister, whom he was very sorry to lose; nothing proves this better than a billet he wrote him

towards the last, when they wrote oftener than they saw each other. M. de Choiseul complaining to his master of a horrible annoyance by which he was menaced, the latter replied, 'What you imagine is false; people deceive you; be on your guard against those who surround you whom I do not like. You do not know Madame Du Barry; all France would be at her feet, if . . . Signed: Louis.' Does not this billet, which I have seen, express the wish for an arrangement, a prayer to lend himself to it, and the avowal, strange enough from a king, that the simple suffrage of his minister would do more than all that lay in his royal power?"[1] This reflection which is added by M. de Gleichen, is in the taste and style of the eighteenth century: "It is most astonishing that the sensitive heart of M. de Choiseul could have resisted so much kindness, the desire to play a trick on his enemies, and the certainty of reigning more comfortably by the aid of a woman who would have been entirely at his orders."

The Duke de Choiseul had been the favorite of the Marquise de Pompadour. It was not morality, then, which prevented his being on good terms with the Countess Du Barry, for, from the point of view of scandal, the two mistresses were on an equality, and from the point of view of the goodness of character, the Countess was much better than the Marquise.

[1] *Souvenirs de Baron de Gleichen*, preceded by a notice by M. Paul Grimblot.

The great noble, prouder of his person than of his place, the audacious statesman, more influential, more flattered than his master, and saying to those about him: "Don't outbid the King; that is not worth while," the brilliant duke and peer who remembered that in former times a man of his rank would have thought he degraded himself by accepting a place as secretary of state, and who fancied he was doing a great honor to Louis XV. in being willing to be his minister, Choiseul, infatuated with his triumphs, was no longer the skilful courtier of the days of Madame de Pompadour.

The idea of inclining before an inferior sultana revolted the pride of this grand vizier who did not dread the bowstring. As has been very well said by M. Jobez in his book, *La France sous Louis XV.*, he was "one of those men of pleasure who occupy themselves with public affairs as a diversion agreeable to both their imagination and their vanity." He would not endure anything contrary to his convenience or his tastes. Madame Du Barry displeased him; he defied her. To believe that the minister who had concluded the family compact and annexed Corsica to France; who had dared to break a lance in the face of the most powerful of modern associations, the Jesuits; who was the idol of the nobility, the Parliaments and the philosophers; who, celebrated in every tone by all the trumpets of Fame, had been able to make himself feared and admired by Europe, — to believe that he, the Duke de Choiseul,

would be sacrificed to a creature of the Du Barry sort, seemed to him unlikely and absurd.

It was this, however, which occurred. Let us affirm, for the rest, that the enmity of the Countess was not the sole cause of the minister's downfall. If he was upheld by the Dauphiness, he had an adversary in the Dauphin, because, several years before, he had said to the father of this Prince: "Monseigneur, I shall perhaps have some day the misfortune to be your subject, but I will never have that of being your servant." Religious people reproached him with the expulsion of the Jesuits and the friendship of Voltaire. The conservatives accused him of a weakness for the Parliaments. The peace party found his foreign policy bungling and disquieting. They accused him of being on the point of doing what Louvois had done under the reign of Louis XIV., of setting Europe afire in order to prove that the Ministry of War had been well conducted. Louis XV., who grew more timid as he grew older, became frightened, possibly not without reason. The alliance of the Northern courts already existed in principle. England was menacing. A conflict between the English and the Spanish had just broken out in the Falkland Islands. Louis XV. was persuaded of the imminence of a coalition, and a new Seven Years' War, which would be due, said they, to the imprudence and levity of Choiseul. The enemies of the minister then apprised Madame Du Barry that the time had come to be done with him.

The story-tellers pretend that, tossing up oranges, she exclaimed, bursting with laughter: "Skip, Choiseul! skip, Praslin!" They add that, after having announced to Louis XV. that she had just discharged her cook, she said to her royal lover: "I have got rid of my Choiseul; when will you get rid of yours?"

December 24, 1770, the minister received the following letter from the King: —

"My Cousin, — The discontent caused me by your services forces me to exile you to Chanteloup, whither you will repair within twenty-four hours. I would have sent you further, if it were not for the particular esteem I have for Madame the Duchess de Choiseul, whose health interests me much. Take care that your conduct does not make me take another course. Whereupon, I pray God, my cousin, that He may have you in His holy keeping. Signed: Louis."

Then was seen, as has been remarked by M. Henri Martin, what had never been seen before, — the court faithful to the person in disgrace. During the few hours that elapsed before the Duke and Duchess de Choiseul quitted Paris, an innumerable crowd of great lords and ladies, magistrates, military men, citizens, men of letters, came to inscribe their names on the register of his house. The young Duke de Chartres, that prince who was afterwards to be called Philippe-Égalité, forced his way in to throw himself into the arms of the exiled min-

ister.[1] The highest personages solicited the King's authorization to pay visits to Chanteloup. Did this signify that human nature was better, more generous, than at other epochs? Not at all. It was simply that opposition was then in fashion. It was thought, moreover, that Choiseul would return to power. Count de Ségur has said in his Memoirs: —

"The King remained almost alone in his mistress's boudoir. A column put up at Chanteloup, on which the numerous visitors of the exile inscribed their names, served as a monument of this new Fronde. The impressions of youth are keen, and never shall I forget that produced in me by the pleasure of seeing my father's name and mine traced on this column of opposition, the presage of other resistances which afterwards assumed such grave importance. . . . From one end of the kingdom to the other, people made a point of honor of the opposition; to lofty minds it seemed a duty, to generous men a virtue, to the philosophers a useful weapon to regain liberty; in fine, a means of becoming conspicuous, and, so to say, a fashion which the young seized upon with ardor. The Parliaments made remonstrances, the preachers sermons, the philosophers books, the young courtiers epigrams. Feeling that the government was in unskilful hands, everybody defied a government which no longer inspired either confidence or respect."

[1] See M. de Grasset's interesting work, *Madame de Choiseul et son Temps*. 1 vol. Didier.

Madame Du Barry, little adapted to political contests, was all surprise at her victory. Marie Antoinette had seen, and not without keen vexation, the downfall of a friend devoted to the house of Austria. Alarmed by this event, Maria Theresa desired her daughter to treat the powerful favorite with deference. But the disgust which this woman inspired in the Dauphiness was daily on the increase. Count de Mercy-Argenteau wrote to the Empress, September 2, 1771: "Your Majesty will have deigned to observe in my first and very humble report, that Monsieur the Dauphin had approved of my representations as to the utility it would be to Madame the Dauphiness not to treat the Countess Du Barry too badly. This point appears to me more essential than ever, because it is the focus of all the annoyances and regrettable proceedings into which the King might allow himself to be drawn in order to show his resentment toward his children. The occasions which I have had to see this favorite have given me an opportunity to become acquainted with her; she seems to have little intelligence, and much levity and vanity, yet without displaying a wicked or hateful character. It is very easy to make her talk, and in many cases one can profit largely by her indiscretion. I am certain that if Madame the Dauphiness could be induced to speak to her only once, it would then be very easy for me to curb any further pretensions and to prevent the thousand embarrassments arising from the singular position of the interior of this court."

Maria Theresa abounded in the same sense as her ambassador. She wrote a letter, September 30, 1771, to Marie Antoinette, in which she recommended her to treat Madame Du Barry as a lady admitted to the court and the society of the King. Declaring that the Dauphiness, as first subject of the sovereign, owed obedience and submission to Louis XV., she added: "You owe the example to the court and the courtiers, that the wishes of your master should be executed. If base actions or familiarities were required of you, neither I nor any one else could counsel them to you, but an indifferent word, certain attentions, not for the lady, but for your grandfather, your master, your benefactor!" In spite of all Maria Theresa could say, it was none the less regrettable that a grandfather should wish to impose such an associate on the wife of his grandson.

This was a real suffering for the legitimate pride of Marie Antoinette. "The ascendancy taken by the Countess Du Barry over the King's mind has scarcely any bounds," wrote Count de Mercy, December 19, 1771; "it visibly influences whatever concerns the royal family, and the more the favorite is mortified by ill treatment, the more use she seeks to make of advantageous moments to show her resentment." Count de Mercy, acting on the instructions of the Empress, did not cease trying to induce the Dauphiness to be polite to the favorite, and ended by gaining his cause in a certain measure. He relates it with satisfaction in a letter written to Maria

Theresa, August 14, 1772. He says that Madame Du Barry having arrived after the King's Mass, with the Duchess d'Aiguillon, "Madame the Dauphiness spoke to the latter; turning toward the favorite afterward, she made some remarks about the weather and the hunting parties, in such a way that, without directly addressing the Countess Du Barry, the latter might nevertheless believe that these remarks were made to her as much as to the Duchess d'Aiguillon. Nothing more was needed to make the favorite very well contented. The King, apprised of what had passed, seemed much satisfied with it, and showed as much to Madame the Dauphiness by the little attentions he paid her the same evening at the state dinner."

Marie Antoinette, however, in spite of her desire to conform to her mother's recommendations, could not conceal the repugnance inspired in her by the woman whose favor was such a shameful scandal.

In a letter addressed to her mother, January 21, 1772, the Dauphiness was unable to dissimulate her feelings of revolt against certain requirements: "Madame my very dear mother," said she, "you may well believe that I will always sacrifice my prejudices and repugnances, so long as nothing ostentatious or contrary to honor is proposed to me. It would be the unhappiness of my life if misunderstandings arose between my two families; my heart will always be for my own, my duties here will be very hard to fulfil. I shudder at this idea."

Marie Antoinette's noble candor stung Maria Theresa to the quick. The Empress, accustomed to domination both as mother and sovereign, replied to her daughter, February 13: "You have made me laugh by fancying that either I or my minister could ever give you counsels against honor, or even against the least decorum. Such traits show what a hold prejudices and unwise counsels have on your mind. Your agitation after a few words makes one tremble for you. What interest could I have but your good and even that of your State, the Dauphin's happiness and your own, the critical situation in which you and all the realm and the family find yourselves, the intrigues and factions? Who can advise you better than my minister, who knows the kingdom thoroughly and the instruments at work there. . . . It is necessary to follow all the counsels, without exception, which he will give you, and, by a measured and consistent course of conduct to undertake to satisfy everybody."

If Maria Theresa insisted with so much vivacity, it was because she knew that at this very moment the powers hostile to Austria were redoubling their efforts to conciliate the favorite and break the alliance between the courts of Vienna and Versailles. "We know for sure," she wrote to her ambassador, "that England and the King of Prussia want to gain over the Du Barry; you ought to know better than I if you think the thing is so. The King is constant in his friendships, and I dare

appeal to his heart; but he is feeble, his surroundings do not leave him time to think. . . . If France smirks with Prussia, which will surely betray her, then I must tell you that this is the only point where I could not prevent myself from changing, even to my great regret; but that would be infallible. To prevent these evils and annoyances for the monarchy and the family everything must be employed, and there is no one but my daughter, the Dauphiness, assisted by your counsels and acquaintance with the locality, who could render this service to her family and her country. Above all, she must cultivate the good graces of the King by her assiduity and affection; let her try to divine his thoughts, avoid shocking him in any way, and treat the favorite well. I do not require base actions, still less intimacies, but the attentions due in consideration of her grandfather and master, and of the good which may result for us and our two courts; perhaps the alliance depends on it." O nothingness of human grandeurs! A woman of mind, of heart, of genius, a Maria Theresa, subordinating the friendships of the most powerful empires on earth, the maintenance of the general equilibrium, the destinies of Europe, to the goodwill of a Du Barry! The unfortunate Marie Antoinette, more to be pitied than envied, in spite of all her éclat, her beauty, and prestige, began to become what she was to be until her death: the victim of policy.

X

THE DAUPHINESS AND MARIA THERESA

HISTORY does not contain a more curious correspondence than that between the Empress Maria Theresa and her ambassador at Versailles, Count de Mercy-Argenteau. Never perhaps was the character of a sovereign and the talent of a diplomatist revealed in a more striking manner. Maria Theresa shows herself completely in her letters. What we have here is the political woman accustomed to power and domination; the woman of brains who sees, knows, and directs everything; the mother who inspires her children with fear and veneration; the sovereign who occupies herself with the same solicitude and the same authority in her family and her empire. Her counsels are like orders, her language is the language of command. Although her daughter may have become a Frenchwoman, she always regards her as a German princess, and would like to make of her a sort of Austrian ambassadress, accredited to Louis XV., but subordinate to Count de Mercy. Astonished that a young girl of fifteen should not have the penetration,

the experience, the maturity of a matron, the Empress does not admit the right in Marie Antoinette to have the slightest imperfection. To her, the Dauphiness always remains the schoolgirl of Schönbrun and the Burg.

Like all those who govern, Maria Theresa has a passion to be well informed. The most minute details interest her. She wants to know the least particulars of the physical and moral life of her daughter. Nothing escapes her. She thinks of everything: toilettes, reading, conversations, dances, promenades, all pass under her rigorous, incessant control. Were she installed in the château of Versailles she could not know all its detours in a more thorough manner. She does inhabit it in spirit; she knows all the secrets, all the snares. Take care! she says to her daughter every minute. Knowing the French character as well as if she had lived in France all her life, she knows what to think of human levity, malice, ingratitude, and cowardice, and what a fund of envy and meanness exists in the character of many courtiers. The Capitol does not make her forget the Tarpeian rock for her daughter, and at certain moments she utters such dismal words, she casts such an unquiet look toward the future, that one might think that, divining the destiny of her Antoinette, she sees the scaffold in the misty distance.

On his side, the correspondent of the Empress is a model of diplomacy. Supple, active, reserved,

knowing how to put himself on good terms with all who can be useful to his government, agreeable to Louis XV. and the royal family, to the Duke de Choiseul and the Duke d'Aiguillon, to the devotees and to Madame Du Barry, an observer of the first order and an indefatigable worker, exact to minutiæ, prudent to exaggeration, skilful in handling all the pieces of the most complicated diplomatic chess-board, Count de Mercy-Argenteau is in love with his profession. When he addresses his *very humble reports* to his sovereign, he brings to them an excessive care and zeal; if he happens to receive the felicitations of the *Sacred Majesty*, as he always calls the Empress, he breaks into transports of joy. The letters he wrote to Maria Theresa independently of his official despatches, form a veritable journal of the existence of the Dauphiness. Everything is there with its date and hour. The ambassador knows what passes in the salons of the Princess, and knows also what does not pass in her alcove. A chambermaid, a physician, what am I saying? A confessor would not be better informed.

As to the Dauphiness, she is still a child. Sweet, simple, ingenuous, incredulous of evil, mocking a little at etiquette, sincerely pious, but with an always amiable piety, regretting Vienna but loving Versailles, German by her memories but French by her heart, full of respect and affection for her august mother but finding her at times a trifle too severe, the seductive Princess, on account of the inexplic-

able coldness of her husband, is still a young girl although a married woman.

If she has some little defects, if from time to time she can be accused of some trifling imprudences which one day she will expiate in a manner so cruel, they are the imprudences and defects which have the excuse of youth and also its charm. Marie Antoinette, and it is this which gives her physiognomy something so sympathetic and so graciously feminine, Marie Antoinette has the spirit of her age, its gaiety, sprightliness, unconcern. This amiable Dauphiness, who calls Louis XV. papa, and who throws her arms about his neck without asking his permission; who, still a child herself, takes her chief pleasure in the society of children, and who, when she sees her lady of honor appear, the severe and punctilious Countess de Noailles, says with a laugh: "Now let us behave properly; here comes Madame l'Etiquette;" this Princess, so natural and charming, contrasts with her surroundings as spring does with winter. She resembles the young trees full of sap which grow freely in the fields, and not those puny shrubs in the park of Versailles which cannot grow except under rule and square. Her simplicity is her most beautiful ornament. Her richest diadem is her long fair hair. Not one of her jewels can be compared to the sparkle of her eyes.

Well, if one can believe it, this Princess whose innocence and gentleness should soften all hearts,

is already surrounded by enemies. Mercy-Argenteau wrote to Maria Theresa, April 16, 1771: "It is almost impossible that Your Majesty should form a very exact idea of the horrible confusion prevailing here in everything. The throne is debased by the extension of the favorite's credit and the malevolence of her partisans. The nation vents itself in seditious proposals and indecent writings in which the person of the monarch is not spared. I have not hesitated to make these representations to Madame the Dauphiness, and have frequently called her attention to the fact that the only possible means of avoiding the inconveniences of a time so critical is to keep profound silence concerning things as well as persons, and Her Royal Highness begins to feel the necessity of this method." The frank and expansive young girl must conduct herself like an old diplomatist. She must measure and calculate each gesture, each word, even her very silence. Everything is noted, commented on, and criticised. Underneath its majestic exterior this court is a veritable ant-hill of petty passions, petty intrigues. There is nothing but mines and countermines, ambushes, coalitions, cabals. There is Madame Du Barry's camp, which is that of the ministers, that of Madame Adelaide and her sisters, the camp of the Duke de Choiseul's friends, and even that of the Count de Provence, who, though so young, is already a wily politician. The Dauphiness is spied upon in the most odious manner. Her letters, her

composition books, are read, and pages of them are torn out, evidently with a view to imitating her handwriting. It troubles her to find that there are double keys to her furniture. In order to preserve her mother's letters, she is obliged to hide them under her pillows.

Maria Theresa is intensely preoccupied by this whole state of affairs. She is especially displeased with Mesdames. Although she recognizes their solid qualities and incontestable virtue, she is jealous of them, and is constantly criticising them; she will not admit that these princesses have the right to give their young niece the least advice. "I own to you," she writes to Count de Mercy-Argenteau, February 11, 1771, "that in the stormy circumstances of the court of France, my daughter's situation greatly disturbs me. Her nonchalance, her slight inclination for all serious application, her indiscretion (caused by her youth and vivacity), her relations with her aunts, and particularly with Madame Adelaide, who is perhaps the most intriguing and best known of the sisters, furnish me with more than one subject of fear." Maria Theresa, who is German to the ends of her finger-nails, and who has no liking for the French nation, although she sought the alliance of the court of Versailles, experiences, moreover, a sort of jealousy of the affection manifested for her new country by the former Archduchess. "People have a right to be astonished," she writes to her, "at the slight cordiality

and interest that you have for Germans. Believe me, the Frenchman will esteem and rely upon you more if he finds in you the German solidity and frankness. Don't be ashamed to be German even to awkwardness." One comprehends that a young Dauphiness of France would need a good deal of filial respect not to become a trifle impatient under this by far too Germanic advice. The Empress is sounder when, still using severe, but this time very sensible, language, she writes to her daughter, July 9, 1771: "I expect in vain every month the list of your reading and your occupations. . . . At your age, levities and puerilities are easily excused, but in the long run they tire everybody and you too; they will make you very uncomfortable. . . . I cannot conceal from you that people are already beginning to talk about them, and by that you will lose the grand idea that has been formed of you, an essential point for us who are on the theatre of the great world. A life constantly dissipated, without the slightest serious occupation, will affect even your conscience."

There are moments when the mother's exhortations to her daughter are veritable lectures, when her pen is like a ferule. One may judge of them by this letter of September 30, in the same year, wherein, after complaining especially because the Dauphiness is not gracious enough toward Madame Du Barry, the imperious sovereign wrathfully exclaims: "You are so greatly lacking toward your ben-

efactor on the very first occasion when you can oblige him! . . . Observe now for whom? By a shameful wish to please people who have enthralled you by treating you as a child, by procuring you rides on horseback and on donkeys, with children, with dogs; such are the great reasons which attach you by preference to them rather than to your master, and which in the long run will make you ridiculous, neither loved nor esteemed. You began so well. Your appearance, your judgment, when not controlled by others, is always correct and what it should be. . . . I require you to convince the King of your respect and tenderness by all your actions, considering on every occasion what will please him. . . . Even should you be obliged to embroil yourself with all the others, you have but one sole aim, — to please the King and do his will."

Marie Antoinette, accustomed to respect her mother as much as God himself, always bends before this authority which admits of no reply. Sometimes she happens to forget certain recommendations, but she is assuredly excusable. As Count de Mercy writes the Empress in a letter of June 16, 1772, "the bad manners of her companions, the habit of receiving neither reprimand nor contradiction nor even advice from the King, nor from Monsieur the Dauphin either, and the three hundred leagues which separate her from you, are doubtless the reasons why severe letters have not always produced the desired effect." Moreover, Maria Theresa re-

lents at times. From the tone of reprimand she passes to that of tenderness. Occasionally her maternal admiration speaks in accents worthy of Madame de Sévigné. She writes to her daughter, October 31, 1771: "You have something so touching in your whole person that it is hard to deny you anything; this is a gift of God for which you should thank Him, and use it for His glory and the welfare of others." It is because she would like to have her perfect, both physically and morally, that she says in a letter of December 31, 1772: "What! the Antoinette of twelve or thirteen years knew how to receive her company very prettily, and say something polite and gracious to every one; this truth has been evident to all Vienna, the whole Empire, Lorraine, and France,—and is the Dauphiness now to be embarrassed by a simple private person? Do not accustom yourself to these frivolous excuses; embarrassment, fear, timidity, chimeras! People employ such terms as those without reflection, to excuse a bad habit of not incommoding themselves. You know how you have gained hearts by affability; you see the opposite of that daily; can you allow yourself to neglect this important point. I am ending the old year with my sermons; you will wrong me if you do not accept them as the greatest mark of my tenderness and the interest I take in your future welfare, with which I am continually occupied."

Marie Antoinette, who is all goodness and sensi-

bility, bears her mother no ill will for her often severely given counsels, and her filial piety is never in fault. One should read, in a letter of Count de Mercy-Argenteau, February 29, 1772, the account of the grief inspired in this charming Dauphiness by the news that her mother was slightly ill: "The first word troubled Madame the Dauphiness so greatly that she could hear nothing further. She returned to her cabinet, dissolved in tears, and unable to say anything except that she was not in a condition to give audience. She asked for a rosary Your Majesty had given her, and began to pray. Monsieur the Dauphin, who did not leave her, seemed to share very sincerely the grief of his august spouse."

Maria Theresa sometimes complains that her daughter's letters are not long enough. This is because she has not a clear notion of the difficulties the young Princess encounters when she tries to write to her in peace. As M. de Mercy-Argenteau tells her, Marie Antoinette always writes quickly, lest she should be surprised either by her husband or her aunts, to whom she never shows the letters she addresses to her mother. Her correspondence is certainly not a masterpiece of style. But, honestly, could one expect a young German girl to write French like a member of the Academy? At least, the letters of Marie Antoinette, simple, natural, and without literary pretension, have the advantage of proving a good heart, a pure conscience, a character full of frankness.

When one goes to the bottom of history instead of studying nothing but the surface, what especially strikes one is the slight difference that exists between sovereigns and ordinary people. Does not the great Maria Theresa, the illustrious Empress, remind one, in spite of all her prestige, of those good middle-class women who are constantly telling their daughters to sit up straight? Palaces, thatched hovels, garrets, the same joys and sorrows, passions and vexations, are found under the roof of each.

To sum up, there is nothing grave in the reproaches which Maria Theresa addresses to her daughter, and at any other epoch the Dauphiness would have received nothing but praise. But at that time people were inclined to criticise everything, and the first breath of the Revolution was agitating French society.

As yet, however, the delightful, the incomparable, Dauphiness is the idol of the court and the nation. What charm! what brilliancy! what attractions! How she eclipses all other women! What a difference there is between her and her sisters-in-law, the Countess de Provence and the Countess d'Artois! Everywhere and always, Marie Antoinette is the first, in grace as well as beauty. One would say she is already on the throne. When, at the beginning of the second act of Gluck's *Iphigenia*, the chorus exclaims: "Sing, let us celebrate our queen," the public turns toward the Dauphiness and salute her enthusiastically, as if her reign had already

begun. How she animates by her gaiety, how she illumines by her smile, this grand palace of Versailles which, without her, would be so dismal! What life there is in the private balls which she gives every Monday in her apartments! People dance there for the pleasure of dancing, without ceremony and without etiquette. The ladies come in white dominos, and the men in their ordinary attire. Here shines one of the most poetic and sympathetic of women, the Princess de Lamballe, that twenty-year-old widow who will be Marie Antoinette's best and most faithful friend; the Princess de Lamballe, who surrounds with such affectionate cares her father-in-law, that venerable .Duke de Penthièvre, to whom Florian said, in dedicating to him a Biblical poem:[1]

"Pieux comme Booz, austère avec douceur,
Vous aimez les humains et craignez le Seigneur.
Hélas! un seul soutien manque à votre famille;
Vous n'épousez pas Ruth, mais vous l'avez pour fille."[2]

At these Monday balls, to which only the élite of the nobility are admitted, and invitations to which make people so proud and happy, those young men make their appearance in society who are about to

[1] See M. de Lescure's interesting work: *La Princesse de Lamballe.*

[2] Pious like Boaz, gentle though austere,
You love mankind and yet the Lord you fear.
One prop your family yet lacks, alas!
You wed not Ruth, who takes a daughter's place.

become all the rage, the great liberal lords, the chevaliers of new France, the Lafayette, Lauzun, La Marck, Ségur, Dillon, Noailles, Lameth. The Monday festivities are not enough. Other balls are given on Wednesday, in the apartment of the Countess de Noailles, Marie Antoinette's lady of honor. The Dauphiness comes there for the first time on the arm of her husband, who says to the Countess on entering: "I hope, Madame, that you will kindly receive the husband and the wife; we do not come here to cause embarrassment, but to share your amusements."[1]

The Dauphin and the Count de Provence dance rather clumsily; on the other hand, the Count d'Artois, that type of the elegant gentleman, is an accomplished dancer. As to Marie Antoinette, as graceful as beautiful, as lively as she is charming, she has the gait of a goddess.

Et vera incessa patuit dea . . .

Her only defect is that of being slightly satirical. Like Count de La Marck, she makes a jest of what is ugly or unpleasant. She loves young people, she wishes them to be gay, to amuse themselves and banish gloomy thoughts. How full of life she is those winters of 1771 and 1772, when, in company with the Princess de Lamballe, she enjoys her favor-

[1] Count de Mercy-Argenteau's letter to Maria Theresa, February 25, 1771.

ite amusement, those sleigh-rides which are like a vision of Northern poetry! And how majestic, on the 8th of June, 1773, the day of her ceremonious entry into Paris, when, in a gala carriage resplendent with gold and drawn by eight horses, followed by five other equipages not less magnificent, she goes, in great pomp, first to Notre Dame, afterwards to the church of Saint Geneviève, and finally to the palace of the Tuileries.

The air is rent with enthusiastic cries, all hats are flung up, all hearts are enraptured, all hands beat wild applause. The cry, Long live the Dauphiness! issues from every breast. At every step the Princess hears them saying: "How pretty she is! How beautiful! How good she looks!" A rain of flowers descends from every balcony, every window. This is not merely joy and admiration; it is intoxication, delirium. Moved to the very depths of her soul, and forgetting this time all her sorrows and presentiments, Marie Antoinette joyfully describes to her mother this unparalleled festivity, the remembrance of which will be so sweet.

"On returning from the promenade," she writes, June 14, 1773, "we climbed an open terrace (at the Tuileries) and remained there half an hour. I cannot tell you, my dear mamma, what transports of affection were displayed for us at this moment. Before leaving it we waved our hands to the people, which gave them great pleasure. How fortunate we are in our position to gain the friendship of a whole

people so cheaply! And yet there is nothing so precious; I felt that thoroughly, and shall never forget it. Another point which caused great pleasure on this beautiful day was the conduct of Monsieur the Dauphin. He made wonderful replies to all the addresses, noticed everything that had been done for him, and especially the joy and eagerness of the people, to whom he displayed great goodness. . . . To-morrow we are going to the Opera at Paris; this is greatly desired, and I even think we shall go two other days to the French and Italian Comedies. Every day I am more and more sensible of what my dear mamma has done for my establishment. I was the youngest of all, and she has treated me as if I were the eldest; hence my soul is filled with the most tender thankfulness."

XI

THE PAVILION OF LUCIENNES

MADAME DU BARRY throned it like a queen. At last she had succeeded in being able to assume, whenever the notion took her, the manners and language of the great ladies. Choosing her associates from among women of the highest rank, a Maréchale de Luxembourg, a Duchess d'Aiguillon, a Maréchale de Mirepoix, she received dukes and peers, ministers and ambassadors. When Gustavus III., King of Sweden, came to the court of France, in 1771, he offered a very rich collar to the favorite's little dog. The policy of Madame Du Barry, if one admits that a woman of that sort can have a policy, was more authoritative, more conservative, than that of Madame de Pompadour. Madame Du Barry did not rely upon the philosophers, and always alarming Louis XV. about the danger of parliaments, she incessantly reminded him of the example of princes who, like Charles I., allow their royal prerogatives to be attacked. At the auction of Baron de Thiers's effects, she bought a portrait of that unhappy monarch for twenty-four

thousand livres, and it is asserted that, showing this painting to Louis XV., she said to him: "France, do you see this picture? If you let your Parliament go on, it will cut off your head, as the English Parliament did to Charles."

The sense of danger restored to the old sovereign a vigor which assured his tranquillity so long as he lived. The Parliament had assumed a factious attitude in consequence of its quarrels with the Duke d'Aiguillon. Declaring that "its members, in their profound affliction, found their minds not sufficiently free to give decisions on the property, life, and honor of the King's subjects," it refused to render justice. Louis XV. destroyed this beginning of revolution in its germ. During the night of January 17, 1771, all the members of the Parliament were arrested in their dwellings, and summoned to reply merely yes or no to an order to resume their functions. All responded negatively. They were at once declared unseated, and departed into exile. A new Parliament, called the Maupeou Parliament, after the chancellor who had advised this coup d'État, took the place of the former one, and showed itself perfectly docile. As has been remarked by M. Théophile Lavallée, the wheels of the governmental machine were so worm-eaten that even the organ of resistance, touched by the finger of a courtesan, a Du Barry, crumbled into powder. To the people, the magistrates seemed only privileged persons discredited by the trials of Lalli, Calas, and La Barre.

Maupeou announced that justice would be rendered gratuitously, that appointments should no longer be hereditary, and that a new code of civil and criminal procedure would be drawn up. Voltaire, always the partisan of success, went into ecstasies over the glory of the chancellor, the author of this stroke, and celebrated it in an enthusiastic piece of verse: —

"Oui, que Maupeou, tout seul, du dédale des lois
Ait pu retirer la couronne,
Qu'il l'ait seul rapportée au palais de nos rois,
Voila ce que j'ai vu, voila ce qui m'étonne.
J'avoue avec l'antiquité
Que ses héros sont admirables;
Mais, par malheur, ce sont des fables;
Et c'est ici la vérité." [1]

Madame de Pompadour had overthrown the Jesuits. The Jansenists were crushed by Madame Du Barry. From his retreat at Ferney, Voltaire flattered the favorite with those refinements of adulation of which he had the monopoly. June 20, 1773, he wrote the following letter: —

"MADAME, — M. de Laborde tells me you have

[1] Yes, that Maupeou, alone, from the labyrinth of the laws
Has been able to withdraw the crown,
That he alone has returned it to the palace of our kings,
This is what I have seen, this is what amazes me.
I avow with antiquity
That its heroes are admirable;
But, unfortunately, they are fables;
And this is the verity.

ordered him to embrace me on both cheeks on your account: —

"Quoi! deux baisers sur la fin de ma vie!
Quel passeport vous daignez m'envoyer!
Deux! c'est trop d'un, adorable Egérie,
Je serais mort de plaisir au premier.[1]

"He has shown me your portrait; do not be angry, Madame, if I have taken the liberty of returning it the two kisses: —

"Vous ne pouvez pas empêcher cet hommage,
Faible tribut de quiconque a des yeux.
C'est aux mortels d'adorer votre image,
L'original était fait pour les dieux.[2]

"I have heard several bits from M. de Laborde's *Pandora;* they have seemed to me very well worthy of your protection. The favor shown to the real fine arts is the only thing which could enhance the brilliancy with which you shine.

"Deign, Madame, to accept the profound respect of an old solitary whose heart has no longer hardly any sentiment but that of gratitude."

Public opinion was less severe on the favorite than might be believed. People pardoned her for-

[1] What! two kisses toward the end of my life!
What a passport you deign to send me!
Two! that is one too many, adorable Egeria,
I shall be dead of pleasure at the first one.

[2] You cannot prevent this homage,
The feeble tribute of all who have eyes.
'Tis for mortals to adore your image,
The original was made for the gods.

tune, because she was, as they vulgarly said, a good girl, because "she had in her heart the affections of the common people, their natural attachments, the sentiment of family."[1] She went every fortnight to spend a day with her mother, whom she had transformed into a Marquise de Montrable, and provided with a lodging at the convent of Saint Elisabeth, a carriage, a country seat, and a little farm, called La Maison Rouge, near Lonjumeau.

Madame de Pompadour, the personification of the middle class parvenue, had excited furious anger in all ranks of society. The Du Barry displeased less, because she was less haughty. Her triumph, moreover, was in harmony with an epoch when, as Chateaubriand has said, "court and city, men of letters, economists and encyclopedists, great lords and gentlemen, financiers and burghers, resembled each other, as witness the memoirs they have left us."

More and more wearied of the rules of etiquette, the aged Louis XV. thought of nothing but living like a private gentleman, loving women, hunting, and good cheer as long as possible. All that was grand fatigued him. Versailles, too vast, too majestic for him, harassed him like a prison. To the magnificent residence of Louis XIV. he greatly preferred the little pavilion he had built in 1771, just beside the château of Luciennes, and which belonged to Madame Du Barry.

There are monuments which are symbols. This

[1] *Les Maîtresses de Louis XV.*, by MM. de Goncourt.

palace-boudoir, temple of a libertine divinity, represents marvellously the close of the reign of Louis XV. Ledoux was the architect of this little masterpiece, and its salons were adorned by the brushes of Joseph Vernet, Greuze, and Fragonard. Situated on an eminence from which one beheld a magnificent view, this square pavilion, with its five windows fronting in every direction, resembled a château of Alcina, the abode of an enchantress. It has a peristyle of four columns in the Grecian style and a Bacchanalian dance of children in low relief. The entrance is by a vestibule which served as a dining-room on great days. This is the room reproduced in the fine water-color of Moreau Jeune, now in possession of the Louvre Museum. The walls are of white marble. Capitals surrounded by gold display the united arms of Louis XV. and the favorite. In front of the vestibule are the tribunes for the Countess's musicians. This large hall opens on the square salon; the panels of the door were painted by Fragonard. On either side of the grand salon is another smaller one. In that on the right there is a set of four paintings by Vien, representing a symbolic history of love in the heart of young girls; in that on the left, entirely adorned by mirrors which reflect a superb mantelpiece of lapis lazuli in the form of a tripod, Briard has painted on the ceiling the allegory of love in the country.

When Louis XV. comes to Luciennes, he has no

apartments separate from those of the Countess, with the exception of his dressing-room. Extremely careful of his person, he needs a private room in which to repair, if necessary, the little disorders of his toilet, and to have more powder put on when his hair requires it.

What a little gem, what a charming trifle, is this marvellous pavilion! Cornices, bas-reliefs, pilasters, bits of jeweller's work, locks, window fastenings, — each detail is an object of art, a treasure. What refinements of luxury! What caprices, what puerilities, what freaks of ornamentation! Chinese knick-knacks, statuettes in Dresden porcelain, coffers of ebony and ivory, lacquered furniture, screens covered with birds of paradise of sparkling plumage, cages of paroquets, aviaries in gold and silver filigree!

Amidst all these curiosities one perceives a little spaniel, white as snow, a Brazilian monkey, a small flame-colored parrot, and a Bengalese child, of a coppery black, with his brilliant eyes and bizarre accoutrements. This singular negro boy, this living toy, is Zamora, Zamora whom the Countess held at the baptismal font, with the Prince de Conti for the other sponsor, and whom Louis XV. amuses himself by appointing governor of the pavilion of Luciennes, by a decree countersigned by the Chancellor of France. They change this negro's costume as if he were a doll. Sometimes he is dressed as a savage, with red feathers, variegated garments, necklaces of

beads and coral. Sometimes he puts on a green frock coat, braided with gold, and accompanies the runner who, squeezed into a polonaise of sky blue cloth, brandishes, as he runs, a superb cane with a carved head. Sometimes he is in vest and breeches of pink satin, on those brilliant evenings when from the tribunes of the vestibule resound the notes of violin, flute, and hunting-horn; where, amid great ladies in dazzling toilettes and nobles clad in velvet, precious stones, and blue ribbons, crystals, baskets of flowers, and innumerable lights, the Countess Du Barry beams as if in an operatic scene, as in an apotheosis of gallantry and sensual pleasure.

But showy dress is not what best becomes her coquettish and sprightly person. She is still prettier and more piquant when she puts on the half feminine, half masculine uniform of the Queen's light cavalry. Then Dorat addresses her the following enthusiastic lines: —

"Sur ton double portrait le spectateur perplexe,
Charmante Du Barry, veut t'admirer partout;
A ses yeux changes-tu de sexe,
Il ne fait que changer de goût.
S'il te voit en femme, dans l'âme,
D'être homme il sent tout le plaisir;
Tu deviens homme, et d'être femme
Soudain il sent tout le désir."[1]

[1] Over thy double portrait, charming Du Barry,
The perplexed spectator wishes to admire thee everywhere;
If thou changest thy sex before his eyes,
He has only to change his taste.

At Luciennes, Louis XV. lives like a banker in a small house. The Most Christian King has no longer any majesty. He puts on a simple white vest, and amuses himself, like an honest citizen, in gardening a little. He likes to walk underneath the lindens, and afterwards to sit on the terrace whence he can see at his feet the stream, which, making a double turn, winds like a horseshoe under the hill. On the horizon is Saint-Germain, the cradle of Louis XIV., Saint Denis, the burial-place of kings, whither he will presently go to rejoin his ancestors, and, in the misty distance, Paris, the carping, revolutionary city, which seems to menace him. Tired of Versailles, Louis XV. breathes the free air on this terrace and endeavors to forget: to forget the mistakes of his official and his secret diplomacy, to forget the first partition of Poland which is going on, the injunctions of England which, preventing France from aiding the Swedes or the Poles, forbid her fleets to enter either the Baltic or the Mediterranean; to forget, in fine, his own old age, and another decline not less afflicting, that of the French monarchy. The blasé sovereign casts a glance of disenchantment at the present, a glance of keen anxiety toward the future. But here comes the Countess Du Barry with her arch face,

---

If he sees thee as woman, in his soul
He feels all the pleasure of being man;
Thou becomest man,
And suddenly he is all desire to be a woman.

her provoking smile, her rosy mouth which calls for kisses. Louis XV. cheers up in an instant.

Was Madame Du Barry more immoral than Madame de Pompadour? I do not believe it. Was she more detrimental to France? I do not believe that either. Were the beginnings of the Marquise's favor more noble than those of the Countess? Was the first more truly in love, more disinterested, than the second? For my part, I do not see much difference. Nevertheless, I am tempted to find Madame de Pompadour more culpable than Madame Du Barry. Her husband was the better man of the two. M. Lenormand d'Étioles had not, like M. Du Barry, formed a wretched contract under the pretext of marriage; he loved his wife, he surrounded her with care and attentions; he had done absolutely nothing to merit the unjustifiable abandonment and unexpected treachery of which he was the victim.

M. Du Barry, on the other hand, had willed his own fate. Whatever may be said about it, the Marquise was not in reality more of a grand lady than the Countess. One reflects that the aristocracy thought her vulgar. D'Argenson spoke of her contemptuously; Richelieu saw in her nothing but a misplaced amusement, "which was not adapted to subsist worthily at court"; Voltaire, her regularly appointed flatterer, stigmatized her as a cackler, a grisette created for the opera or the seraglio. The Pompadour was elegant; the Du Barry was not less so. Each of them contrived to talk the language of Versailles, and to wear their clothes as well as

the ladies of the highest nobility. D'Aiguillon, the favorite of the Countess, belonged to a family not less ancient than that of Choiseul, the favorite of the Marquise. Both of them obliged the aristocracy to accept their families. If one metamorphosed her brother, Abel Poisson, into the Marquis de Marigny, the other married her nephew, the Viscount Adolphe Du Barry, to the daughter of the Marquis de Tournon, a relative of the Soubises and the Condés. One advantage the Countess certainly had over the Marquise: no one could lay on her the responsibility for any war or for the selection of any general.

The evil passions, hatred and rancor, ambition and cupidity, pride and the love of domination, were infinitely more active in the soul of Madame de Pompadour than in that of Madame Du Barry. One was a commercial, intriguing, calculating woman, mistress of herself, egotistic, haughty, vindictive. The other was a daughter of the people, not virtuous but not malicious, not lofty in sentiment but not spiteful, possessing all the defects of courtesans but also their thoughtlessness, prodigality, playfulness. In the gallery of the women of Versailles I shall place Madame Du Barry unhesitatingly above Madame de Pompadour, because the Countess is credited by all her contemporaries with a quality that was lacking to the Marquise, a quality which expiates many faults, many shames, many vices, and without which no woman whatever can awaken sympathy, — that of good nature.

XII

THE DEATH OF LOUIS XV.

LOUIS XV. foreboded his approaching death. Like all men who retain the habit of debauchery until they are old, he found more suffering than delight in sensual pleasure, more pain than joy. Expiating a few minutes of false rapture by long hours of ennui and discouragement, he experienced the painful pressure of fatigue, the remorse of the body, and of remorse, the fatigue of the soul.

Count de Mercy-Argenteau wrote to Maria Theresa, June 16, 1773: "Although His Majesty's health has not grown worse within a month, yet it is observed that he is becoming more subject to vapors and ennui. His first liking for the favorite having been weakened by time, and this woman possessing infinitely few resources of mind or character, the King finds very slender entertainment with her, and even that is mixed up with inconveniences whose effects he constantly experiences."

In his correspondence with his sovereign, the ambassador frequently returns to this incurable melancholy of Louis XV. He wrote, August 14th

of the same year: "The King is growing old, and from time to time seems to have regrets. He finds himself isolated, without aid or consolation from his children, without zeal, attachment, or fidelity from the bizarre assemblage composing his ministry, his society, his surroundings." And February 19, 1774: "From time to time the King begins to make remarks concerning his age, his health, and the frightful account that must one day be rendered to the Supreme Being for our employment of the life He has accorded to us in this world. These reflections, occasioned by the death of some persons of his own age, who died almost before his eyes, have greatly alarmed those who retain the monarch in his present errors, and from that moment, everybody has thought it his duty to conceal such events as far as possible." People criticised the actions, the secret thoughts, of Louis XV., his occasional returns to religious practices, his more frequent visits to his daughter Louise, the Carmelite, the humility with which he had listened to a courageous prelate, Monseigneur Beauvais, Bishop of Senez, saying to him in a sermon delivered before the whole court: "Solomon, satiated with voluptuousness, tired of having exhausted, in the endeavor to revive his withered senses, every sort of pleasures that surround the throne, ended by seeking one of a new kind in the vile remnants of public license."

Louis XV. was sixty-four years old. In his last days, as in those of his early youth, he was hesitat-

ing between vice and virtue when, April 28, 1774, he was attacked at the Little Trianon, by a malady which at once became alarming. The sick man was taken to the château of Versailles, and at once what has been so well named "the jobbing and traffic in the King's conscience" began. The Aiguillonists, the Barriens, as the partisans of the minister and the favorite were called, maintained that the illness was not serious, and would not listen to any mention of the sacraments. The friends of the Duke de Choiseul, on the other hand, urgently demanded that the King should receive extreme unction, which must be the signal for the dismissal of his mistress. Concerning this, the brothers Goncourt have made the judicious remark: "It happened, strangely enough, that the Aiguillon party, that of the devotees and the Jesuits, combined to prevent the communion of Louis XV., while the Choiseul party, that of the philosophers and unbelievers, combined to force this communion." The Aiguillonists trembled. The King's malady was extremely serious, being smallpox of the most dangerous description. If the old monarch should die, it was all up with their favor. If he should recover, he would this time become devout. In either case, Madame Du Barry would be nobody.

The courtiers, fearing contagion, did not come near the chamber of the royal invalid without alarm. One of them, M. de Létorières, succumbed for nothing but opening the door and looking at the King

two minutes. More than fifty persons caught it by merely passing through the gallery. The daughters of Louis XV., Mesdames Adelaide, Victoire, and Sophie, gave at this time an admirable example of courage and filial piety. Although they had never had the smallpox, they heroically braved the scourge. While the Dauphin and his two brothers, the Counts of Provence and Artois, prudently withdrew, the three Princesses did not hesitate to shut themselves up in the chamber[1] of their deserted father. They remained there from the time his illness began until his death.

The Archbishop of Paris, Monseigneur Christopher de Beaumont, paid a visit to the King, May 2. "As they were on the watch for everything," says Baron de Besenval in his Memoirs, "as soon as the Archbishop appeared, people saw Marshal de Richelieu hastily leave the King's apartment and go as far as the hall of the guards[2] to meet him; there, drawing him aside, they sat down on a bench. It was noticed that the Marshal talked with great vehemence and animated gestures; although what he said could not be overheard, it was not difficult to see that he was trying to deter him from proposing to administer the sacraments." The King did not make up his mind at once. Meanwhile, the sickness

[1] Room No. 126 of the *Notice du Musée de Versailles*, by M. Soulié.

[2] Room No. 120 of the *Notice du Musée de Versailles*, by M. Soulié.

was growing worse. The physicians used the word "delirium" in the bulletin of May 3, a piece of frankness which exasperated the Duke d'Aiguillon. In the evening of May 4, Madame Du Barry was introduced into the sick man's chamber. "Madame," he said to her, "I am ill; I know what I have to do. I will not renew the scenes of Metz; we shall have to part. Go to M. d'Aiguillon's house at Reuil. Be sure that I shall always have the tenderest affection for you." The next day, at three o'clock in the afternoon, the favorite left Versailles, where she was never to reappear.

Behold Louis XV. on his deathbed. In vain he entreats his courageous daughters to leave him; for the first time in their lives they disobey him. The old King, as Mercy-Argenteau writes to Maria Theresa, gives "many signs of repentance and resignation." He is repairing by a Christian end the scandals of his long existence. In the night of May 5–6, he asks for the Abbé Mondou, his confessor. He receives absolution, and at the first glimmer of dawn, May 6, he asks to have the sacraments brought. Showing extreme impatience for the priest's arrival, he sends M. de Beauvau several times to the window to see if the messenger of God is not on his way. At last the clergy approach with the sacraments. The royal invalid briskly throws off his bed coverings, and forces himself into a kneeling posture, leaning against the front of his bed. As the physicians try to induce him to cover himself up,

he says: "When my great God does a wretch like me the honor to come to him, it is the least he can do to receive Him with respect." After the Communion, the grand almoner, Cardinal de La Roche-Aymon, reads aloud the public apology made by the sovereign to his people. "Although the King," exclaims the Cardinal, "owes an account of his conscience to God alone, he declares that he repents of having given occasion for scandal to his subjects." At these words, the dying man, in a voice broken by the last agony, said: "Repeat those words, Monsieur the almoner, repeat them." Let us own that if Louis XV. did not know how to live, he had at least the merit of knowing how to die well.

A candle burning in the King's chamber, which was to be extinguished at the same moment as the life of the King, was the signal agreed on for the measures to be taken and the orders given as soon as he should have breathed his last. The candle was put out at two o'clock in the afternoon of May 10, 1774. Instantly a great tumult, comparable to a clap of thunder, shook the arches of Versailles. It was the crowd of courtiers leaving the antechambers of the dead man and noisily hastening to meet the new monarch. He who now called himself Louis XVI. threw himself spontaneously on his knees along with his wife. "My God!" he exclaimed, "guide us, protect us; we are too young to reign!" At six in the evening the new King and Queen departed for Choisy. Versailles was now only a desert.

Count de Ségur says, in his Memoirs, concerning this sudden solitude: "Dazzled from infancy by the splendor of the throne, the extent of the royal power, a witness of the apparent zeal, the affected ardor, the continued eagerness of courtiers and those incessant arts of homage which resembled a sort of cult, the last agony and the death of the King caused me to shed tears. What was my surprise when, on hastening to Versailles, I found myself solitary in the palace, when I saw a general indifference and even a kind of joy pervading the city and the gardens! The setting sun was forgotten; all adorations were turning toward the rising one. Not yet laid in his tomb, the old monarch was already numbered among his motionless and silent predecessors. From that time his reign was ancient history, and people concerned themselves only about the future; the old courtiers thought of nothing but how to keep their credit under the new reign, and the young ones of how to supplant them. The counterspell for the enchantments of a court is a change of reigns; then the heart is laid bare; all illusions end; the dead king is no longer more than a man, and often less. There is no dramatic stroke more moral than that, nor more adapted to make one reflect."

At the moment when Louis XV. was in his agony, the Duke de Liancourt noticed that a valet of the wardrobe was in tears. "Well," said the Duke to him, "are you weeping for your master?" To

which the domestic answered in a loud tone: "Oh! not for that. If I am crying, it is for my poor comrade, who has never had the smallpox, and who will die of it." The corpse, rolled up hastily in the sheets of the bed, was thrown into a triple coffin of oak and lead. Several priests, in the mortuary chapel, were the only victims condemned not to abandon the remains of the miserable King. May 12, the coffin was placed on a large coach. As is related by Baron de Besenval, "a score of pages and fifty mounted grooms, carrying torches, but like the carriages, not dressed in black, composed the entire procession, which set off at full trot at eight o'clock in the evening, and arrived at Saint Denis at eleven, amidst the gibes of the curious spectators on either side of the road, and who, under cover of the darkness, gave full scope to jesting, the dominant characteristic of the nation. They did not confine themselves to that; epitaphs, placards, verses, were scattered broadcast, aspersing the memory of the late King."

A letter written by the Countess de Boufflers to Gustavus III., July 20, 1774, shows what were then the sentiments of a part of the French nobility. "After his death," says the Countess, speaking of Louis XV., "he was abandoned, as usual, and even in a still more terrible manner on account of the nature of the disease; he was promptly interred; his corpse passed through the wood of Boulogne on its way to Saint Denis, about midnight. Cries of

derision were heard as it passed by; people kept repeating: Taïaut! taïaut! as when a stag is seen, and in that ridiculous tone in which it is customary to pronounce it. If this circumstance is true, it shows great cruelty; but nothing is more inhuman than the indignant Frenchman, and, it must be agreed, he never had more cause to be so; never have a nation squeamish about honor, and a nobility naturally proud, received a more signal or less excusable insult than that given us by the late King when, not contented with the scandal he had given by his mistresses and his seraglio, at the age of sixty we saw him draw from the vilest class and the most infamous condition, a creature of the worst sort, in order to establish her at court, admit her to his table with his family, make her absolute mistress of favors, honors, and rewards, of politics and the laws, of which she has been the ruin, — misfortunes which one can hardly expect will be repaired. One cannot help regarding this sudden death and the dispersion of this infamous troupe as a stroke of Providence."

If the nobility spoke thus, what must the bourgeoisie and the Parisian population, always so caustic and fault-finding, have said? Satirical verses in the style of those that follow were published: —

" Te voilà donc, pauvre Louis,
Dans un cercueil, à Saint-Denis!
C'est là que la grandeur expire.
Depuis longtemps, s'il faut le dire,

Inhabile à donner la loi,
Tu portais le vain nom de roi,
Sous la tutelle et sous l'empire
Des tyrans qui régnaient pour toi.

"Étais-tu bon? C'est un problème
Qu'on peut résoudre à peu de frais.
Un bon prince ne fit jamais
Le malheur d'un peuple qui l'aime,
Et l'on ne peut appeler bon
Un roi sans frein et sans raison,
Qui ne vécut que pour lui-même. . . .

"Faible, timide, peu sincère,
Et caressant plus que jamais
Quiconque avait su te déplaire,
Au moment que de ta colère
Il allait ressentir les traits:
Voilà, je crois, ton caractère.
Ami des propos libertins,
Buveur fameux, et roi célèbre
Par la chasse et par les catins:
Voilà ton oraison funèbre." [1]

[1] There thou art, poor Louis,
In a coffin at Saint Denis!
There doth grandeur expire.
For a long time, one must needs say,
Incompetent to give the law,
Thou hast borne the idle name of king
Under the tutelage and the empire
Of tyrants who reigned for thee.

Wert thou good? It is a problem
Which can easily be resolved.
A good prince never causes
The wretchedness of a people who love him,

O kings! was not Bossuet in the right when he said that although seated on the throne you were none the less sitting under the hand and the supreme authority of God? What reflections there are to make over the inanity of the grandeurs of this world, the miseries of court life, the recantations and meanness of flatterers, the shameful calculations of ambition and interest, the ugliness of the human heart! What a lesson! that frightful, horrible, repulsive death struggle of this sovereign, who had exhausted all the enjoyments of luxury, all the refinements of pleasure, all the elegances of voluptuousness! What a contrast between the boudoirs full of lights and flowers and perfumes, and the coffin where rotted "that indescribable something for which no language has a name"! What spectacle is at once more dismal and more instructive than the lamentable ending of this prince who had once been called the Well-Beloved?

And one cannot call good
A king without restraint or reason,
Who lives for no one but himself. . . .

Feeble, timid, insincere,
And caressing more than ever
Him who had managed to displease thee,
Up to the moment when of thy wrath
He was about to feel the effects:
That, I think, was thy character.
Lover of loose speeches,
Famous drinker, and king celebrated
For hunting and for wantons:
That is thy funeral oration.

EPILOGUE

THE SCAFFOLD OF MADAME DU BARRY

THE fatal year, 1793, has sounded. Nineteen years have elapsed since the death of Louis XV. How many changes! What revolutions! No throne, no altars, no aristocracy. Versailles is a solitude. There are sick-beds in the gilded galleries. Sheep browse in the gardens. Grass grows between the flagstones of the courtyards. The fountains are dry. The marble statues, the bronze groups, are thrown down or mutilated. The greatest crime in all French history has just been accomplished; the head of the son of Saint Louis, the Most Christian King, has fallen on the scaffold.

What has become of Madame Du Barry in the tempest? Where is that woman who contributed so greatly to the enfeebling of the monarchical principle, and, consequently, to the present catastrophes? Since October, 1792, she has been in London. She has not emigrated, and it was only after having made herself all right with the authorities of the day that she went to England to prosecute legally the authors of the robberies committed at Luciennes. The guilty

persons have crossed the Channel, and Madame Du Barry is searching for them.

But before speaking of this pursuit, let us go back a little and recall the fate of the favorite after the accession of Louis XVI. Exiled at first to a convent in the suburbs of Metz, the abbey of the Bernardines of Pont-aux-Dames, she received after a few months an authorization to return to her dear pavilion of Luciennes. Her affairs, which at first had been embarrassed on account of enormous debts, were nearly settled. She always lived in great luxury, with a numerous household. Many of her relations with the court had remained unbroken, and though it seems that she gave her royal lover more than one successor, she retained a sort of mundane veneration for his memory. Distinguished foreigners always made a point of being presented to the late King's mistress.

When the Emperor Joseph II. came to pay a visit to his sister, Marie Antoinette, he went to Luciennes and walked in the garden with the Countess Du Barry. His Imperial Royal and Apostolic Majesty offered her his arm. In her later years the Countess had made a conquest of an accomplished gentleman, the Duke de Cossé-Brissac, a true type of the great noble, heroically brave and exquisitely courteous. Not merely did the Duke take Madame Du Barry seriously, but he showed her as much attention and respect as to the highest placed lady in the kingdom. To enthusiastic admiration he united the

most vivid and profound attachment. As has been said by MM. de Goncourt, there is in this attachment of M. de Brissac such a bestowal of himself, such delicate attentions, such eagerness to oblige, so profound a worship, that it troubles and disconcerts one's judgment on the woman esteemed worthy of such a love. Still beautiful, Madame Du Barry thought herself destined to a happy and tranquil ending, since she had disarmed her enemies themselves by her sweetness, gaiety, and good nature. Luciennes was still a delightful place. But the storm was rumbling in the distance, and the Countess, always improvident, had reckoned without the revolutionary tide which was rising, rising incessantly, and which was to submerge all.

Madame Du Barry will abjure neither the court nor the monarchy. The woman of the people will remain a royalist, not forgetting that she is a countess and has been the mistress of a king. In 1789, after the October Days, she had sheltered the bodyguards at Luciennes and carefully tended their wounds. The Queen had thanked her for this courageous act, and the former favorite of Louis XV. had written to the wife of Louis XVI. a letter cited in the Memoirs of Count d'Allonville, in which she thus expressed herself: "These wounded youths have no other regret than that of not having died for a princess so worthy of all homage as is Your Majesty. What I have done for these heroes is far less than they deserve. I console them, and I

venerate their wounds when I think, Madame, that but for their devotion Your Majesty would perhaps be no more.

"Luciennes is yours, Madame; was it not your benevolence which restored it to me? All that I possess came to me from the royal family: I have too much gratitude ever to forget it. The late King, by a sort of presentiment, forced me to accept a thousand precious objects before removing me from his person. I had the honor to send you this treasure at the time of the meeting of the notables; I offer it to you again, Madame, with eagerness. You have so many expenses to provide for, and numberless benefits to confer!"

In 1791, Madame Du Barry had spent several days in Paris at the house of the Duke de Brissac. Thieves profited by her absence from Luciennes to enter the pavilion of the château and possess themselves of the magnificent gems contained in the jewel cases of the Countess. Then they had carried their spoil across the Channel. The next year, the Duke de Brissac had been massacred at Versailles. He left a will in which, speaking of his daughter, Madame de Mortemart, whom he made his universal legatee: "I earnestly recommend to her a person who is very dear to me, and whom the misfortunes of the times may reduce to the greatest distress. My daughter will have a codicil from me which will indicate to her what I ordain on this subject."

The codicil contained an important legacy to

Madame Du Barry. "I beg her," said the Duke, "to accept this feeble pledge of my sentiments and my gratitude, for which I am all the more her debtor because I was the involuntary cause of the loss of her diamonds; and if she ever succeeds in getting them back from England, those which remain lost, and the cost of the different journeys rendered necessary by the search for them, in addition to the reward to be paid, would amount to the actual value of this legacy. I entreat my daughter to make her accept it. My knowledge of her heart assures me of the exactitude with which she will acquit herself of it, whatever may be the charges with which my estate will be burdened by my testament and my codicil, it being my will that none of my other legacies shall be paid until this one has been entirely accomplished."

The theft of the jewels was to prove fatal to the Countess. She had been so imprudent, in this time of jealousies and hatreds, as to attract public attention to her riches by posting on the walls of Luciennes and its environs a bill whereon might be read: "Two thousand louis reward: diamonds and jewels lost." Then followed an enumeration of the diamonds, pearls, emeralds, rubies, and sapphires. Greed was aroused. The village of Luciennes had its club; it was claimed there that the Countess possessed countless treasures, that incalculable riches were concealed in the pavilion, that it was the mine from which the royalists drew with full hands, that

the Countess was going to direct and pay the reactionaries.

M. Sardou has said: "When History makes a drama, she makes it well." The true historic drama, that which is no fiction but reality, has its vicissitudes, its contrasts, its gradations. It has above all its traitors. Do you remember Zamora, that child of Bengal, whom the mistress of Luciennes had held at the baptismal font and whom she had overwhelmed with benefits, that little negro who carried a parasol over the favorite's head, and whose inky blackness threw into relief the snowy whiteness of the Countess's visage? Well, the miserable Zamora is a traitor. In league with Madame Du Barry's former steward, he is the accomplice of one Greive, who styles and signs himself "Official defender of the brave sans-culottes of Luciennes, friend of Franklin and of Marat, factionist and anarchist of the first rank, disorganizer of despotism in the two hemispheres for twenty years." This hideous crew pursues the Countess with its hatred. She is a prey that the tigers who scent the odor of blood will be sure to find the way to devour. Zamora has sworn that he will make his benefactress ascend the scaffold, and Zamora will keep his word.

Madame Du Barry had made four journeys to England in pursuit of those who stole her jewels. Her last stay on the other side of the Channel had lasted four months and a half, from the middle of October, 1792, to the beginning of March, 1793.

Why did this woman, who certainly did not shine by her courage, conceive the fatal idea of returning to France? Was the fear of never seeing again the treasures hidden in the pavilion of Luciennes stronger than her sentiment of prudence? Or rather, was not the victim dragged on by a sort of inexplicable fatality, by the vertigo, the fascination, of the abyss?

She leaves London, March 3, 1793, lands at Calais the 5th, is detained there until the 18th to await new passports, and arrives at Luciennes the 19th. She finds seals on the pavilion. Zamora and his accomplices, that band of infamous servants to whom Madame Du Barry had been so gentle, kind, and generous, ruthlessly continued their odious denunciations. The Convention rendered, June 2, a decree expressed in these terms: "The constituted authorities, throughout the whole extent of the Republic, shall be obliged to have seized and placed in arrest all persons notoriously suspected of incivism." Madame Du Barry's persecutors availed themselves of this decree to arrest her. Once she has been released and reinstated in her pavilion. But hatred is not discouraged. The wretches take an address to the Convention in which, speaking in the name of "the brave sans-culottes of Luciennes," they call for the definitive arrest of a woman who, say they, "has been able, by means of her riches and her caresses learned at the court of a feeble and dissolute monarch, to escape, in spite of her notoriously incivic relations, from the Declaration of the Rights of Man,

and has made her château the centre of liberticide projects against Paris." The Convention applauds this stupid language and felicitates the commune of Luciennes on its patriotism. The thing is done. Madame Du Barry is ruined.

September 22, surrounded by gendarmes, she quits the pavilion of Luciennes, which she is never again to see. She is transferred to the prison of Sainte-Pelagie, where she is placed in the chamber that had been occupied by Queen Marie Antoinette. What funereal presentiments! What alarms! What dismal thoughts! In her prison, she who had been the mistress of Louis XV. could think of the corpse of her royal lover. A few days before, August 10, the Convention had executed its decree concerning the violation of the tombs of Saint Denis, of that Saint Denis which the favorite formerly beheld from the heights of the terrace of Luciennes. They had exhumed "these former kings and queens, princes and princesses." They had broken the coffins, and melted the lead of them. The corpse of Louis XV., like that of Louis XIV. and his predecessors, had been cast into the common pit.

The Countess Du Barry shudders. Now it is her time to die. December 7, 1793, at nine o'clock in the morning, she appears all trembling before the revolutionary tribunal. Fouquier-Tinville is spokesman, in virtue of his office as public prosecutor, and in his requisition he yields to what he calls "his indignation as an honest man and a patriot." He

declaims in that cruel and inflated jargon, odious and grotesque, of which this infamous epoch has the secret. He declares that he "does not wish, through modesty, to lift the veil which should cover forever the frightful vices of the court." The modesty of Fouquier-Tinville! . . . Several of the former domestics of Madame Du Barry, Zamora at their head, are cowardly enough to depose against her. The penalty of death is pronounced. The poor woman grows pale and totters. The gendarmes are obliged to support her so that she may not fall. She is to mount to-morrow the fatal cart, the bier of the living, as Barrère calls it.

Mad with terror, breathless, the condemned woman passes a night of anguish. She revolves every means of prolonging her existence for some hours, some minutes. She says she will make revelations, she will show at Luciennes the hiding-places of all her jewels, all her treasures. The public prosecutor sends a substitute to her cell. She details, like a woman who is afraid of forgetting something, all the items of her inventory, because she imagines that every word adds a second to her life. But the executioner is waiting. She must go.

It is the 8th of December, 1793. Fifty-three days before, another woman, a queen, had come out of the same prison, the same chamber, to go likewise to execution. The cart was filthy. For a seat a board. On the board neither hay nor straw. Behind the victim, Sanson the executioner, holding the

ends of a thick cord which tied the condemned Queen's arms behind her. A poor comic actress had lent her a gown in which she could decently present herself at the scaffold. Well! in this sorry attire, amidst the yelling of the crowd, on a cold morning in October, the daughter of the Cæsars had been more sublime, more majestic, than on the throne. Dressed in white, like a phantom, a little red on the cheekbones, but otherwise pale, the eyes injected, not with tears, but blood, the hair whitened by grief, she was to the very end calm, serene, magnanimous, and regarded with mildness and compassion the infernal tumult that surrounded her. For one instant only did her impassible features betray emotion. When the cart was passing rue Saint Honoré, opposite the Oratory, a little child in its mother's arms threw a kiss to the Queen, and at this salute of innocence Marie Antoinette wept. On arriving at Calvary, she sadly contemplated that sacrilegious spot where her husband had been executed, that accursed spot where, twenty years before, had occurred a catastrophe which was an omen. She turned her eyes toward that cemetery of the Madeleine where the victims were then entombed, and where her own headless body was soon to be placed. Then she cast a last glance toward the Tuileries, which to her had been so fatal, the Tuileries, her first prison, and, happening to step on the foot of the executioner, she said to him with queenly politeness: "Sir, I beg your pardon." She died, but it was the death of

heroines and martyrs. She died, but the purple of her blood has covered her with a second royal mantle, and her head, cut off, is resplendent with the flames of an aureole which will shine from age to age. She died, but the pure, the radiant angels have borne her beautiful soul to heaven.

Madame Du Barry does herself justice. She feels that she cannot have so magnificent a death. The apotheosis of the saint is not for her, but the expiation of the sinner. The wife of Louis XVI. had looked death in the face. The mistress of Louis XV. will not have that courage. She is frightened, she sobs, she utters such heartrending cries that it is much if the Terror itself, the unpitying Terror, is not for the first time moved to compassion.

As the cart passes in front of the Palais Royal, the victim perceives the balcony of a millinery establishment from which a number of working-women are looking at the funereal procession. She recognizes the house; it was there she worked as a milliner's apprentice when a very young girl. Alas! why did she become Madame the Countess Du Barry? Her countenance is by turns of a livid pallor or a deep red. She struggles so between the executioner and his two assistants that they can hardly keep her on her bench. Her cries redouble. "Life! life!" she says; "only let them leave me life, and I will give all my property to the nation." Then, from the crowd, a man replies: "You would only give the nation what belongs to it, since the tribunal has

just confiscated your property." A charcoal peddler, standing in front of this man, turns round and gives him a slap in the face. The victim begins anew her supplications. "My friends," she cries, "my friends, I have never done harm to any one! In the name of heaven, I beg you, save me!" Who knows? the stocking-knitters themselves, the furies who lick the guillotine, are perhaps going to be affected by these accents of the woman of the people. This time it is not a queen who is about to die; it is a countess, but a countess who was first a working-woman. The horses are whipped up, the end is hastened to stop the compassion of the crowd. At last the cart arrives at the place which was formerly called Place Louis XV.; there where once rose the statue of the monarch, the scaffold is erected where they are going to execute his mistress. It is half-past four o'clock. "Help! help!" she cries. "Mercy! mercy! Monsieur Executioner! Once more. . . ." The knife falls. It is all over with Madame Du Barry.

Had we not reason to say, at the beginning of this study, that history is a long funeral oration? Ah! as Virgil has said, there are tears in things, and all that is mortal affects our soul:—

Sunt lacrymæ rerum, et mentem mortalia tangunt.

If we confine ourselves to the surface of the ages, we remain cold, indifferent; but if we descend to their depths, if we penetrate the secret of souls, if we lend an attentive ear to voices from beyond the

tomb, to the groanings, the cries of anguish issuing from the abyss of the past, we are possessed by an invincible sadness, a salutary melancholy. We perceive, in the language of Bourdaloue, "that all these grandeurs on which the world glorifies itself and the pride of man is fed, that this birth on which they pique themselves, this credit which flatters them, this authority of which they are so proud, these successes of which they vaunt, these goods in which they glory, these charges and dignities of which they take advantage, this beauty, valor, reputation which they idolize, is nothing but a lie." The lessons of history are neither less instructive nor less eloquent than the best sermons of the preachers. All destinies have their conclusion and all deaths their instruction. One feels surrounded by a host of phantoms, sometimes livid, sometimes bloody, whose sepulchral aspect causes a shudder, and whose dismal voices say: "Remember, man, that thou art dust, and unto dust thou must return.—*Memento, homo, quia pulvis es, et in pulverem reverteris.*

Behold the women of the court of Louis XV.; behold the royal mistresses, once so flattered, who appear for the last time, and one after another take up the word!

"I," says the Countess de Mailly, "when banished by an earthly king, found my consolation at the feet of the King of heaven. I have wept sincerely for my faults, and God, in His mercy, has deigned to grant me time for repentance."

"I," says the Countess de Vintimille, "had barely crossed the threshold of that fatal château of Versailles, when stricken as by a thunderbolt, I died in giving birth to the infant of my crime."

"I also," says the Duchess de Châteauroux, "I passed like the grass of the field which withers in a day. Crushed by affronts and anguish, I lost my miserable sceptre, and at the moment when I seized it again, I died very young, I died enwrapped in my shameful triumph as in the most sorry of shrouds."

"And I," says the Marquise de Pompadour, "never tasted a single instant of real happiness in all my twenty years of power. I had everything except the esteem which cannot be bought. At the bottom of my intrigues and pretended pleasures I found only nothingness. My conscience spoke louder than my flatterers; I felt my own wretchedness. My life, brilliant externally, was inwardly replenished with sorrow and darkness. A sorceress had predicted it to me: I died of nothing but chagrin."

"I," says the Countess Du Barry, the last of the royal mistresses, she whose execution is as it were the summing up, the symbol of the expiations, "I have paid very dear for the enjoyments of luxury and sensuality; I knew neither how to live nor how to die. At an epoch when heroism was a common thing, I weakened, I was afraid, I shuddered on the scaffold!"

After the favorites, it is the turn of the sovereign whose fatal love was the cause of all their misfortunes.

"I," he says, "have seen, like the Preacher, all that is done under the sun, and I have found that all is vanity and vexation of spirit. I became voluntarily the victim of guilty passions which, when once the inebriation was over, left nothing in the soul but a painful stupor and a cruelly felt void. I was disgusted with others and with myself. I did not believe in the prestige of my own crown, and in spite of my riches, my power, my ability to realize all my caprices, there was incarnated in me that gnawing evil, ennui. If my weaknesses have given scandal, horrible has been the chastisement. I have been punished in myself and punished in my race, punished as man, punished as king."

When, in the silence of mind and heart one has just listened to these lessons of history and death, one reflects. After meditating on instructions so austere, one finds the problems of human destiny less insoluble, and recognizing the point from which things must be viewed, one discovers, as Bossuet says, that what at first seems confusion is in fact only concealed art, an ensemble of combinations admirably ordained by Providence. Then earthly grandeurs appear in their true light, and one feels better, calmer, less ambitious, less disposed to complain of the inequalities of fate. The shades of princes and princesses, of great lords and ladies, have their mysterious language, and all combine to say in unison these words from the *Imitation of*

Christ, the most affecting and purest of all books, if the Gospel did not exist: —

"It is vanity to amass perishable riches and place one's hope in them.

"It is vanity to seek for honors and elevate one's self to the chief places.

"It is vanity to follow the desires of the flesh and to love that which in the end will merit rigorous chastisements.

"It is vanity to desire long life and to be so little concerned to have it good.

"It is vanity to think only of present things and not to foresee those that are to come.

"It is vanity to love that which passes so quickly, and not to be eager to gain heaven where joy endures forever."

INDEX

Adelaide, Madame, 146, 167, 191.
Agen, Duke d', his words concerning Madame Louise, 111.
Argenson, Marquis d', his words prophetic of revolution, 24.
Artois, Count d', his character, 144, 145, 174, 191.
Atheism in France, Walpole's words concerning, 68, 72; Diderot's words concerning, 71.

Barbier, quoted, 68.
Beaumarchais, 26; the hero of the day, 27; censured by the court, 27, 28.
Beaumont, Christopher de, Archbishop of Paris, visits Louis XV. during the King's last illness, 191.
Beauvais, Abbé de, 20.
Boufflers, Duke de, 52.
Boufflers, Madame de, 56; her words at death of Louis XV., 195, 196.
Breteuil, Baron de, 84.
Brissac, M. de, see Cossé-Brissac, Duke de.
Broglie, Count de, engaged in secret diplomacy, 83, 84.
Buffon, his words concerning love, 47–50.

Campan, Madame, quoted, 79; reads to Madame Louise, 105, 106; visits Madame Louise at Saint Denis, 110; her words concerning dinners of royal family, 146; her words concerning Madame Sophie, 147.
Carmelite convent at Saint Denis, the, 107 *et seq.*
Catherine II., Czarina, 58; Diderot's adoration of, 71.
Chamfort, his definition of love, 46.
Chartres, Duke de, 155.
Chateaubriand, his words concerning society during last years of Louis XV., 87, 181.
Châteauroux, Duchess de, quoted, 212.
Choiseul, Duchess de, her salon, 54; her sound sense, 54; her criticism of Rousseau, 54–56; her purity, 56; words of Walpole concerning, 56.
Choiseul, Duke de, character of, 88, 89; his enemies, 89, 97; his attitude toward Madame Du Barry, 101–104; his power weakening, 104; meets Marie Antoinette, 132; his downfall, 151–155; exiled, 155, 156.
Church, a revolution forming against, 25.
Clergy of France during last years of Louis XV., 18–21.
Clotilde, Madame, 145.
Cossé-Brissac, Duke de, his attachment to Madame Du Barry, 200, 201; massacred, 202; his legacy to Madame Du Barry, 202, 203.

D'Aiguillon, 187, 190.
D'Alembert, 51; his love for Mademoiselle de Lespinasse, 62, 67.
Dauphin, the, marriage of, to Marie Antoinette, 121; letter to, from

Marie Antoinette, 121; meets Marie Antoinette, 132; celebration of his marriage, 136–142; his character, 144; his hostility to Choiseul, 154, 191; his words at death of Louis XV., 193; departs for Choisy, 193.
Deer Park, 80, 85, 90, 98.
Deffand, Marquise du, the salon of, 57, 60–63; compared with Madame Geoffrin, 60; her blindness, 60; her wit and satire, 62; her letters, 62; Voltaire's fear of, 62; her religious inclinations, 65; her words on life and death, 65, 66; her affection for Horace Walpole, 66; her criticism of Madame Louise, 111.
Desalleurs, Count, 84.
Diderot, his words concerning atheism, 71; his adoration for the Empress Catherine II., 71.
Du Barry, Count Jean, 94, 95.
Du Barry, Count William, his marriage, 95.
Du Barry, Madame, Louis XV.'s passion for, 9, 42; suit between heirs of, 91–93; her birth, 92; her early years, 93; called Mademoiselle l'Ange, 94; delights Louis XV., 94; her marriage, 95; becomes mistress of Louis XV., 95; presented at Versailles, 97, 98; her apartments at Versailles, 98; her house in the city and her riches, 99; her personal charms, 99, 100; Walpole's words concerning, 100, 101; her position at court, 101–104; her attitude toward Duke de Choiseul, 101–104; her words concerning Madame Louise, 112; her relations to Marie Antoinette, 150 *et seq.*; her victory over Choiseul, 151–155; her attitude towards Parliament, 177, 178; letter to, from Voltaire, 179, 180; feelings of the people for, 180, 181; makes her mother Marquise de Montrable, 181; compared with Madame de Pompadour, 179, 181, 186, 187; her life after death of Louis XV., 200 *et seq.*; her conquest of the Duke de Cossé-Brissac, 200, 201; shelters royal body-guards at Luciennes, 201; her letter offering hospitality of Luciennes to Marie Antoinette, 201, 202; her pavilion at Luciennes robbed, 202, 203; her trips to England, 199, 204; betrayed by her servants, 204–206; taken from Luciennes to prison, 206; appears before the revolutionary tribunal, 206, 207; condemned to death, 207; her execution, 209, 210, 212.
Durfort, Marquis de, demands Marie Antoinette for the Dauphin, 121.

Egmont, Countess d', 42.
Elisabeth, Madame, 145.
Eon, Chevalier d', 83.
Epinay, Madame d', her words concerning modesty, 47.
Étioles, Lenormand d', 186.
Encyclopedists, Madame Geoffrin's attitude towards, 64.

Fouquier-Tinville, 206, 207.
Francis, Emperor, 116, 117.

Gassner, forecasts future of Marie Antoinette, 117.
Genet, Mademoiselle, afterwards Madame Campan; see Madame Campan.
Geoffrin, Madame, her salon, 57–60; her husband, 57; her character and manners, 59; the greatest nobles pay court to her, 58; her visits to Warsaw and Vienna, 58, 117, 118; Walpole's admiration for, 59, 60; compared with Madame du Deffand, 60; her relations toward the Encyclopedists, 64; meets Marie Antoinette, 118.

Gleichen, Baron de, 151, 152.
Goethe, his words concerning marriage of Marie Antoinette, 128.
Goëzman, Counsellor, 26, 27.
Guibert, M. de, Mademoiselle de Lespinasse's love for, 67.
Gustavus III. of Sweden, letters to, 41–43, 177.

Henriette, Madame, 86.

Joseph II., Emperor, his visit to Luciennes, 200.

Laborde, M. de, 179; his *Pandora*, 180.
La Bruyère, quoted, 68.
La Harpe, 51.
La Marck, Countess de, 43.
Lamballe, Princess de, 173.
Lespinasse, Mademoiselle de, her salon, 57, 63; sketch of, 62, 63; her unhappy love, 67.
Lorraine, Mademoiselle de, accorded preference by Louis XV. in the minuet at Marie Antoinette's marriage festivities, 137–140.
Louise of France, Madame, in the Convent of the Carmelites, 104; her preparation for convent life, 105, 106; obtains permission to enter the religious state, 107; letters to, from the King and her sisters, 107–110; enters convent at Saint Denis, 107, 108; visited by Madame Campan, 110; criticisms of, 111; her life of religious devotion, 112–114; visited by Marie Antoinette, 133; takes the habit of the Carmelites, 147, 148.
Louis XV., the court during last years of, 2 *et seq.*; his old age, 9 *et seq.*; a *pater* dedicated to, 9; feelings of the people towards, 12, 85, 86; a type of the ancient *régime*, 12; his character, 12–14; his passion for Madame Du Barry, 9; his victory over Parliament, 12, 13, 25; his words to Marshal de Richelieu, 20; his horror of the magistracy, 23; feelings of the middle classes for, 30; love during reign of, 45–50; suffers family bereavements, 79, 80; his attention to Marie Leczinska in her last illness, 80; urged to lead a virtuous life, 80; his apathy and indifference, 81, 82, 88; his secret intriguing policy, 82–84; his lack of will, 85; his personal appearance during later years, 85; the personification of his epoch, 87; makes Madame Du Barry his mistress, 94, 95; closes establishment at Deer Park, 98; gives Madame Du Barry a house in the city, 99; grants Madame Louise permission to enter the religious state, 107; his letters to Madame Louise, 107, 108; meets Marie Antoinette, 132; accords Mademoiselle de Lorraine preference in the minuet at Marie Antoinette's marriage celebration, 137–140; his affection for Marie Antoinette, 145; his reply to Choiseul, 152; dismisses Choiseul, 155; at the pavilion of Luciennes, 181–183, 185; forbodes his death, 188, 189; his melancholy, 188; criticised, 189; taken ill with small-pox at the Little Trianon, 190; urged to receive extreme unction, 190; on his death-bed, 192; receives communion, 192, 193; dies, 193; Count de Ségur's words at death of, 194; his burial, 195; public indignities to corpse of, 195, 196; satirical verses on, 196, 197; his words concerning his own life, 213.
Love during reign of Louis XV., 45–50; Chamfort's definition of,

46; Buffon's words concerning, 47–50.
Little Trianon, the, 190.
Luciennes, pavilion of, 181–186, 199, 200, 202.
Luxembourg, Maréchale de, 51; her position in society, 52–54; fascinates Rousseau, 53; her manners and conversation, 53, 54.

MacMahon, Julienne de, 113.
Magistracy of France during last years of Louis XV., 22–28; horror of Louis XV. for, 23.
Mailly, Countess de, quoted, 211.
Maria Theresa, Empress, 58; her character, 115, 162, 163; her instruction of Marie Antoinette, 116; consults Gassner concerning future of Marie Antoinette, 117; forms Marie Antoinette after manner of the court of France, 118; her sorrow at parting with Marie Antoinette, 121; her *Rule to be Read Every Month*, 125, 126; urges Marie Antoinette to treat Madame Du Barry deferentially, 157, 160; her correspondence with Count de Mercy-Argenteau, 162 *et seq.*; her jealous watchfulness, 167, 168; her exhortations to Marie Antoinette, 168–172; her tenderness, 170.
Marie Antoinette, 104; her birth, 115; her childhood, 116 *et seq.*; loses her father, 117; her future forecast by Gassner, 117; trained to the manner of the court of France, 118; her beauty, 119; her marriage arranged, 120, 121; her letter to the Dauphin, 121; leaves Vienna, 122; chanson addressed to, 123; superstitious presentiments concerning, 124; sees France for the first time, 127; the symbolical ceremony of delivery of, 128, 129; arrives at Strasburg, 130; Prince Louis de Rohan's address to, 130, 131; her route to Paris, 131–133; meets Duke de Choiseul, the Dauphin, and Louis XV., 132; visits Madame Louise, 133; arrives at Versailles, 134; description of, by Bachaumont, 135, 136; festivities at her marriage, 136–142; her reception by the French people, 143; her affection for Louis XV., 145; her apartment, 145; her daily life, 145, 146; witnesses ceremony of the taking of the veil by Madame Louise, 147, 148; the object of ill-feeling, 149, 150; her relations to Madame Du Barry, 150 *et seq.*; advised to treat Madame Du Barry deferentially, 157, 160; her repugnance for Madame Du Barry, 150, 159; her simple, child-like nature, 164, 165; surrounded by enemies, 149, 150, 166; spied upon, 166, 167; lectured by her mother, Maria Theresa, 168, 169; her filial devotion, 171; the idol of the court, 172, 176; dances in apartments of, 173; goes to Choisy with the Dauphin, 193; invited by Madame Du Barry to come to Luciennes, 201, 202; death of, 207, 208.
Marie Leczinska, 79; last illness and death, 80, 95.
Maupeou Parliament, see Parliament, Maupeou.
Maximilian, Archduke, serves as proxy for the Dauphin in marriage of Marie Antoinette, 121.
Mercy-Argenteau, Count de, 157; urges Marie Antoinette to treat Madame Du Barry deferentially, 158, 159; his correspondence with Maria Theresa, 162 *et seq.*; his character, 163, 164.
Middle classes in France during last years of Louis XV., 29–33; their

feelings toward Louis XV., 30; religious sentiment among, 32.
Mirepoix, Maréchale de, 56; her criticism of Madame Louise, 111.
Montesquieu, his words concerning the ruling classes of France, 24.
Montrable, Marquise de, 181.

Nobility of France during last years of Louis XV., 15–17; intimacy of, with men of letters, 51.

Ogny, M. d', 83.
Olbach, Baron d', 74.

Pandora, Laborde's, 180.
Paris, salons of, see Salons of Paris.
Parliament, victory of Louis XV. over, 12, 13; the Maupeou, 25, 178, 179.
Pater, dedicated to Louis XV., 9.
Penthièvre Duke de, 173.
People, of France during last years of Louis XV., 34–39; La Bruyère's words concerning, 34; Masillon's words concerning, 34.
Philosophers, the, during last years of Louis XV., 68–76; their position in society, 69, 70; Walpole's words concerning, 70, 73, 74; their gravity, 73.
Place Louis XV., catastrophe of, 142, 143.
Poisson, Abel, 187.
Political women, see Women, political.
Pompadour, Madame de, compared with Madame Du Barry, 179, 181, 186, 187; her unhappiness, 212.
Poniatowski, Stanislas, 58.
Provence, Count de, his character, 144, 191.

Richelieu, Marshal de, 100, 191, 192.
Rohan, Prince Louis de, his address to Marie Antoinette, 130, 131.
Rousseau, his *Nouvelle-Héloïse*, 49–51; fascinated by the Maréchale de Luxembourg, 53; the Duchess de Choiseul's criticism of, 54–56.
Rule to be Read Every Month, Marie Theresa's, 125, 126.

Saint-Germain, Count de, 83.
Saint-Priest, M. de, 84.
Salons of Paris, 51 *et seq.*
Ségur, Count de, quoted, 86, 87; his words concerning society during last years of Louis XV., 88; his words at death of Louis XV., 194.
Society in France during last years of Louis XV., Chateaubriand's words concerning, 87; Count de Ségur's words concerning, 88.
Society of the Moment, The, 48.
Sophie, Madame, 146, 147, 191.

Tarouka, Duke de, his wager with the Empress Maria Theresa, 115.
Trianon, the Little, 190.

Vergennes, M. de, 84.
Vermond, Abbé de, instructor of Marie Antoinette, 120.
Versailles, during last years of Louis XV., 9–11; after death of Marie Leczinska, 79; Madame Du Barry's apartments at, 98; deserted, 199; too vast for Louis XV., 181.
Victoire, Madame, 146, 147, 191.
Vintimille, Countess de, quoted, 212.
Voltaire, 51; his fear of Madame du Deffand, 62, 68; his show of religious devotion, 71, 72; his letter to Madame Du Barry, 179, 180.

Walpole, Horace, letters of, quoted, 11, 51, 52, 56, 59, 68; Madame du Deffand's affection for, 66; his words concerning the philosophers, 70, 73, 74; his words on atheism, 68, 72; his retirement

to Chartreuse, 74; his words concerning Madame Du Barry, 100, 101.
Women of the court of Louis XV., lessons of their lives, 211–214.
Women, political, in France during last years of Louis XV., 40–44.
Zamora, 183, 184; a traitor, 204, 205.

Norwood Press:
J. S. Cushing & Co. — Berwick & Smith.
Boston, Mass., U.S.A.

FAMOUS WOMEN OF THE FRENCH COURT

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS, PUBLISHERS

FORMER series of M. Imbert de Saint-Amand's historical works have depicted the great French historical epochs of modern times. The stirring events of the Revolution, of the Consulate and Empire, and of the Restoration period, ending with the July revolution of 1830 and the accession of Louis Philippe, are grouped around the attractive personalities of Marie Antoinette, the Empresses Josephine and Marie Louise, and the Duchesses of Angoulême and of Berry. The remarkable and uniform success of these works has induced the publishers to undertake the translation and publication of a previous series of M. de Saint-Amand's volumes which deal with epochs more remote, but not for that reason less important, interesting, or instructive. The distinction of the cycle now begun with the "Women of the Valois Court" and ending with "The Last Years of Louis XV.," is that, whereas in former series several volumes have been devoted to the historical events associated with each of the titular personalities to which they were closely related, in the present instance a more condensed method is followed. The color of the present series is more personal, and therefore more romantic, as is to be expected in the annals of a period during which the famous women of the French Court were not only more numerous but more influential than their successors of later times. The dawn of the modern era, chronicled in M. de Saint-Amand's "Marie Antoinette and the End of the Old Régime" was the beginning of the extinction of the feminine influence that flourished vigorously in affairs of state from Marguerite of Angoulême to Madame Dubarry. It is the history of this influence that the author has graphically written in the four volumes now announced — "Women of the Valois Court," "The Court of Louis XIV.," and "The Court of Louis XV.," and "The Last Years of Louis XV."

The first volume is devoted to Marguerite of Angoulême and Catherine de' Medici and their contemporaries at the French court during the days of the last of the Valois — the most romantic period of royalty probably in all history. The two principal figures are depicted with striking vividness, — the half Catholic, half Protestant sister of Francis I., the grandmother of Henry IV., the author of the famous "Heptameron," and one of the most admirable historical figures of any epoch; and the diplomatic, ambitious, unscrupulous but extremely human Catherine, universally held responsible for the awful Massacre of Saint Bartholomew. But the subordinate though scarcely less famous women who adorned the Valois Court — Diane de Poitiers, the Duchess d'Étampes, Marguerite of Valois, Marie Stuart, and others — are described with an equally brilliant and illuminating touch.

The volumes on the women of the great Bourbon epoch, the epoch of Louis XIV. and Louis XV., when the Bourbon star was in the zenith, contain a great deal of intimate history as well as setting in relief the interesting personalities of the famous La Vallière and Montespan and that perennial historical enigma, Madame de Maintenon, in the volume devoted to the court of the "Sun King," and those of Madame de Pompadour, Madame Dubarry, Queen Marie Leczinski, and other celebrities who made Versailles what it was during the long and varied reign of Louis XV. The study of Madame de Maintenon is a real contribution to history, and the pictures of the clever and dazzling beauties who controlled so long the destinies not only of France but measurably of Europe itself from the accession of "le Grand Monarque" to the first threatenings of the Revolution "deluge" are extremely lifelike and skilfully executed. The historical chronicle of the time is by no means lost sight of by the author, but in this series even more than in his works heretofore published in English he appears not only as an interesting and impartial historian, but as a brilliant historical portraitist.

FOUR NEW VOLUMES.

WOMEN OF THE VALOIS AND VERSAILLES COURTS.

Each with Portraits, $1.25. *Price per set, in box, cloth*, $5.00; *half calf*, $10.00.

WOMEN OF THE VALOIS COURT.
THE COURT OF LOUIS XIV.
THE COURT OF LOUIS XV.
THE LAST YEARS OF LOUIS XV.

VOLUMES PREVIOUSLY ISSUED.

THREE VOLUMES ON MARIE ANTOINETTE.

Each with Portrait, $1.25. *Price per set, in box, cloth*, $3.75; *half calf*, $7.50.

MARIE ANTOINETTE AND THE END OF THE OLD RÉGIME.
MARIE ANTOINETTE AT THE TUILERIES.
MARIE ANTOINETTE AND THE DOWNFALL OF ROYALTY.

In this series is unfolded the tremendous panorama of political events in which the unfortunate Queen had so influential a share, beginning with the days immediately preceding the Revolution, when court life at Versailles was so gay and unsuspecting, continuing with the enforced journey of the royal family to Paris, and the agitating months passed in the Tuileries, and concluding with the abolition of royalty, the proclamation of the Republic, and the imprisonment of the royal family, — the initial stage of their progress to the guillotine.

THREE VOLUMES ON THE EMPRESS JOSEPHINE.

Each with Portrait, $1.25. *Price per set, in box, cloth*, $3.75; *half calf*, $7.50.

CITIZENESS BONAPARTE.
THE WIFE OF THE FIRST CONSUL.
THE COURT OF THE EMPRESS JOSEPHINE.

The romantic and eventful period beginning with Josephine's marriage, comprises the astonishing Italian campaign, the Egyptian expedition, the *coup d'état* of Brumaire, and is described in the first of the above volumes; while the second treats of the brilliant society which issued from the chaos of the Revolution, and over which Madame Bonaparte presided so charmingly; and the third, of the events between the assumption of the imperial title by Napoleon and the end of 1807, including, of course, the Austerlitz campaign.

FOUR VOLUMES ON THE EMPRESS MARIE LOUISE.

Each with Portrait, $1.25. *Price per set, in box, cloth*, $5.00; *half calf*, $10.00.

THE HAPPY DAYS OF MARIE LOUISE.
MARIE LOUISE AND THE DECADENCE OF THE EMPIRE.
MARIE LOUISE AND THE INVASION OF 1814.
MARIE LOUISE, THE RETURN FROM ELBA, AND THE HUNDRED DAYS.

The auspicious marriage of the Archduchess Marie Louise to the master of Europe; the Russian invasion, with its disastrous conclusion a few years later; the Dresden and Leipsic campaign; the invasion of France by the Allies, and the marvellous military strategy of Napoleon in 1814, ending only with his defeat and exile to Elba; his life in his little principality; his romantic escape and dramatic return to France; the preparations of the Hundred Days; Waterloo and the definitive restoration of Louis XVIII. closing the era begun in 1789, with "The End of the Old Régime," — are the subjects of the four volumes grouped around the personality of Marie Louise.

TWO VOLUMES ON THE DUCHESS OF ANGOULÊME.

Each with Portrait, **$1.25.** ***Price per set, in box, cloth,*** **$2.50;** ***half calf,*** **$5.00.**

THE YOUTH OF THE DUCHESS OF ANGOULÊME.
THE DUCHESS OF ANGOULÊME AND THE TWO RESTORATIONS.

The period covered in this first of these volumes begins with the life of the daughter of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette imprisoned in the Temple after the execution of her parents, and ends with the accession of Louis XVIII. after the abdication of Napoleon at Fontainebleau. The first Restoration, its illusions, the characters of Louis XVIII., of his brother, afterwards Charles X., of the Dukes of Angoulême and Berry, sons of the latter, the life of the Court, the feeling of the city, Napoleon's sudden return from Elba, the Hundred Days from the Royalist side, the second Restoration, and the vengeance taken by the new government on the Imperialists, form the subject-matter of the second volume.

THREE VOLUMES ON THE DUCHESS OF BERRY.

Each with Portrait, **$1.25.** ***Price per set, in box, cloth,*** **$3.75;** ***half calf,*** **$7.50.**

THE DUCHESS OF BERRY AND THE COURT OF LOUIS XVIII.
THE DUCHESS OF BERRY AND THE COURT OF CHARLES X.
THE DUCHESS OF BERRY AND THE REVOLUTION OF JULY, 1830.

The Princess Marie Caroline, of Naples, became, upon her marriage with the Duke of Berry, the central figure of the French Court during the reigns of both Louis XVIII. and Charles X. The former of these was rendered eventful by the assassination of her husband and the birth of her son, the Count of Chambord, and the latter was from the first marked by those reactionary tendencies which resulted in the dethronement and exile of the Bourbons. The dramatic Revolution which brought about the July monarchy of Louis Philippe, has never been more vividly and intelligently described than in the last volume devoted to the Duchess of Berry.

"*In these translations of this interesting series of sketches, we have found an unexpected amount of pleasure and profit. The author cites for us passages from forgotten diaries, hitherto unearthed letters, extracts from public proceedings, and the like, and contrives to combine and arrange his material so as to make a great many very vivid and pleasing pictures. Nor is this all. The material he lays before us is of real value, and much, if not most of it, must be unknown save to the special students of the period. We can, therefore, cordially commend these books to the attention of our readers. They will find them attractive in their arrangement, never dull, with much variety of scene and incident, and admirably translated.*" —THE NATION, *of December 19, 1890.*

OCKER

2 1987